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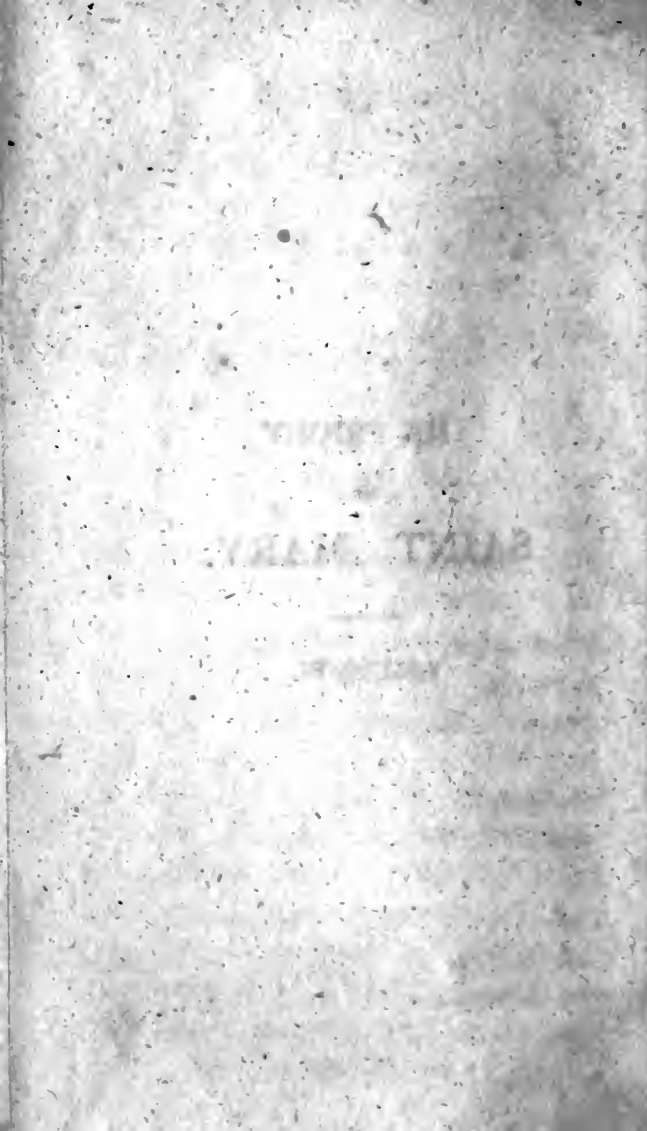
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**THE PRIORY**  
**OF**  
**SAINT MARY.**

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**VOLUME IV.**



THE  
PRIORY  
OF  
SAINT MARY.

A Romance

FOUNDED ON DAYS OF OLD.

In Four Volumes.

BY BRIDGET ST. HILAIRE.

VOL. IV.

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“In these lone walks their days eternal bound ;  
These moss-clad roofs with spiral turrets crown'd:  
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,  
And the dim windows shed a soften'd light ;  
Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,  
And beams of sunshine brighten'd all the day.”

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## PRIORY OF ST. MARY.



*Chapter XXII continued.*

MESSENGERS had been dispatched to the Court of France, to inform the Count of Luxembourg, then engaged in support of Charles the Second, with the precarious situation of his father's health: the circumstances of Conrad's usurpation: and the treaty of amity and peace, of which his hand was destined by the state, to become the future pledge. But ere the intelligence arrived, the Count, who had

witnessed the perfect tranquillity that was restored to Charles, had quitted France and revelled in the Court of England, in all the gay delights of happy heedless youth, nor did the fatal tidings reach his knowledge, until in the Palace of his lamented and illustrious father.

The Ambassadors of Conrad, who in the city of Luxembourg awaited his arrival, in order to acquaint their master, how he might stand disposed towards the good performance of the treaty, were earnest in their request to be made acquainted with his final decision, for it was Conrad's strict command, that their departure should be without delay. Love and the sense of pride and honor, were on the point of inducing him to avow his marriage, and dispatch the Ambassadors with the contempt their master merited, but strongly urged, he checked the impulse, and yielded to the advice of



friends, who held his interests ever as their own.

For two days space he deferred to give his answer to their embassy, and summoning his numerous kinsmen to his council, demanded their opinions. Loudly did the greater number urge for the continuance of war, and stern defiance, but the more ancient and experienced spoke of the utter impossibility of the Duchy, already woefully impoverished, undertaking the continuance of the war with Conrad ; the only method then to preserve his inheritance, was by dissembling, in order to gain time for other measures, for Conrad, taking advantage of the death of the Earl St. Paul, had not, as was agreed, disbanded his numerous army, but held them still in readiness, with the hope that Count John's refusal would furnish him with a plausible pretence to lead them to the gates

of Luxembourg, at a time when he should least be in a situation to withstand the attack.

From Ulrick, of Lichtenstien, a nobleman of the Teutonic order, who owed his birth to the same princely race, to whose care the Count had trusted his loved Ellen, as to a brother in whose friendship, and oft tried faith he could confide with safety; the unhappy wife of Luxembourg heard often, with a sorrowing heart, of the difficulties that, from his marriage surrounded her Lord, now frequently compelled to be absent from her, on the affairs of state. From him too, she first heard that Luxembourg, of a nature fickle and unkind, with some new mistress revelled out the hours, regardless of the hapless dame that loved him, and wronged her honor by delaying to acknowledge her in public for his Countess," "and by my soul he did him no injustice," exclaimed the

angry De Courcy, as he arose and walked the chamber with indignant step; "would to heaven that Ellen had made me her Counsellor, I would have ruined all the future prospects of her husband," "Almerick's, and her's with them," answered the Earl, who as upon his couch had been listening and remarking on what he read, "but rest content, my son, no tongue can tax your sword with being tardy in a sister's cause; for it was Ellen's strenuous request, knowing your own high sense of honor, and how little you would brook her situation, that it should still be kept unknown to you, until every obstacle should be removed, and for this, dreading the consequences of an explanation between the Count and you, she engaged my solemn promise, never, but in the case of strong necessity, to reveal the tale to you."

"And she did well, my Lord,—yet pardon me, if I think she has been want-

ing in the respect she owes the honor of her house, to brook this clandestine marriage; for myself, I own, I could not tamely have borne the idea of a concealment, which though it, from particular circumstances, might be highly necessary, is certainly dishonourable; yet let me ask, my Lord, is the Count John of Luxembourg established in the seat of his inheritance, and does Ellen find at last, her fond hopes of felicity confirmed?"

"I fear," replied the Earl of Monmouth, with a heart-felt sigh, "I fear she does not Almerick; frown not, perchance Ellen has shared the faults of Luxembourg, she listened to the insinuations of the wily Ulrick of Lichtenstein, until more than half the confidence she owed to the honor of the Count, was vanquished; yet let me not condemn her, many were the artifices, no doubt, made use of to injure him in her thoughts, and one too in-

considerate resolve of his, confirmed her fears past doubt. The young Earl of St. Paul, scarcely instated in his seat, pressed by Count Conrad, no longer able to delay, yet ill prepared to meet him, gave, in a fatal hour, a feigned consent to espouse the Lady Hermanfride, and promised to depart the following day towards the county of Westphalia, to ratify the engagements of his father. The knights and chief nobility, forming a noble train were summoned to attend him, under pretence of doing honor to the marriage, but in reality to unite with Rodolphus of Saxony, who, with many other of the chiefs of Germany, awaited John of Luxembourg upon the banks of the Weser, to join their well appointed forces to his standard, and carry war and revenge even to the heart of Conrad's proud domains.

“The tale reached Ellen's ear, told by the insidious tongue of Ulrick of

Lichtenstein, that John of Luxembourg, forgetful of her claims, wantonly had resolved to cast her from his arms and wed another. She listened to his words with grief and doubt: the baron marked with specious heed the conflict in her soul, and repeated the doleful story with added aggravations.

All night did the distracted Ellen pace her apartment with agitated steps and a heart torn with anguish. No messenger as formerly, arrived with letters from her Lord.

Soon after, the footsteps of a man passed slowly along a distant part of the collonade, but she could not distinguish the person, who seemed to retire with lingering reluctance. "It is he," said Ellen, "it is my husband; no! softly; I mistake me there; it is perchance, the haughty Earl St. Paul, who nobly scorns all ties, and hies him to the fair Dame Hermanfried, and let him go, he hopes for happiness; so

did I when I left my native home with John of Luxembourg; but he may live to bear from her the slights he shews to me; full well too, did his letter of last night, which, throwing on his clamorous people the necessity that held him from my presence, accord with this his purpose. Ha! my Lord Ulrick, is it not, say, did not the Earl, even now, depart the castle? nay fear not to speak freely, I am prepared for his neglect; and think I can support it, say was it not my Lord, does he not purpose to quit Luxembourg without bidding me adieu?"

"Judge not so harshly, gentle Lady Ellen, of our gallant friend: what though from anxious solicitude for your tranquillity; he waves this night the interview he sighs for, lest he should wound your quiet; impute it not to change or cold indifference; say rather" and the Baron pressed her hand with

somewhat of a greater warmth than friendship warranted, "that Luxembourg fears to contemplate those fascinating charms, which stern necessity compels him to resign."

"My Lord of Lichtenstein," replied the Countess, "I would gladly at this hour be alone; I doubt not that the Earl can clear his conduct, and to the voice of flattery I listen not."

"Ah pardon, beauteous dame," exclaimed the Baron, "the effusions of a heart, that feeling how impossible it would be to himself, to quit such wonderful attractions, pities and yet condemns the man, whom even an empire, can induce to undergo so hard a destiny. Why Lady do you shun me; wherefore bend on him (whose life lost in your service, were resigned with pleasure) that angry chilling glance, rather ——" "Was I not heard, my Lord? retire,—this insult is too much."

"Oh forgive the too unguarded ac-



cents of a heart that trembles to offend you," cried the courtly Ulrick, "I leave you on the instant, and should the Earl be now as formerly," and he strove to conceal the doubts he wished to propagate of his conviction, it would be of no avail, "attentive to the entreaties of his friend, not many hours will pass ere you behold him."

"Spite of her indignation, the brow of Ellen wore, for a moment's space, a milder grace, and Ulrick, with a brow of feigned contrition, which yet hoped every thing from her awakened jealousy, bowed and retired, while she gazed after him as his receding steps echoed along the gallery, in fixed astonishment. Starting from the reflections, into which the freedom of his speech had thrown her, "holy St. Mary," she exclaimed with accents of astonishment and wonder, "and is it come to this; the Earl of St. Paul listen to his entreaties, do I depend on that? and shall hence-

forward Ellen De Courcy owe the attentions of her wedded Lord to Ulrick of Lichtenstien? Never—Sooner would I for ever be an alien to his heart than I would be so indebted for my reinstatement. Who waits there? Tell my woman, Alice, to send my Chaplain hither. Say that it is my pleasure to be private; admit not any one, not even the Earl Saint Paul. Alas! ill-fated Ellen, there needs not that command: he seeks' no more the thoughtless maid that followed him; and, oh! may you, my brother, ever remain a stranger to her fortunes."

In tears and misery did Ellen pass the night, and the morn rose ere sleep had visited her weary eye-lids. Too truly did she say that Luxembourg no more would seek for her (at least no more did he intend to do so), beneath the splendid roof of Ulrick of Lichtenstein. The heart of the youthful Baron, ever devoted to the admiration of beau-

ty, could not behold the graces of the Countess with indifference : but, as the wife of him who was at once his kinsman and his friend, the sense of honor taught him to suppress the sentiment ; and honor would, perhaps, have been victorious, had not the circumstance of the Earl's consenting, at least of doing so in appearance, to espouse the imperious sister of the haughty Conrad, inspired him with hopes that necessity, which at present obliged him to a temporary concealment of his former marriage, might, in the end, induce him wholly to disavow the claims of Ellen. The person, the accomplishments, the princely lineage of Ulrick of Lichtenstein, descended, in a regular line, from the same stock as even the Emperor, rendered him second to none in all the German empire. What wonder then that he presumed to hope Ellen, already but too evidently the slave of jealous love, forsaken by the Count, and, in

his mansion, distant from her friends and family, might be induced to listen to his passion, and, from revenge, return it.

“Mother of God,” exclaimed the brother of Ellen, burning with scorn; “he did not dare to believe it.”

To effect the new born purpose of his heart, he left no means untried. Well did he know that, should an interview between her and the Earl take place, his hopes were lost for ever; nor was he wanting in the practice of every means that might prevent its taking place. It was by his advice, almost by his entreaty, that the Lord Saint Paul had, with reluctance, penned the fatal billet that confirmed her doubts; for, from the tongue of Ulrick, he learned that some already had gained a knowledge of his recent marriage, and that the ambassadors of Conrad were not wholly unsuspicious of the faith he had promised to their master.

strongly he painted the destruction that must attend the adherents of his cause, and urged him to forbear the visit, which the coming night had promised, least those who sought his ruin should confirm the reports, already circulated, to the detriment of his interests. Yet, apprehensive that the heart of Ellen might, for a moment, hold herself neglected, no sooner had the Council risen, at which the Earl had signified his resolution to fulfill the conditions of the peace agreed to by his noble father, Elmerick, than he hastened to the palace of the Baron, to reassure his Ellen of his faith, and take an unavoidable farewell.

Ulrick received him in the hall, for fear that he would, by his unwished for presence, calm the doubts of Ellen's restless soul, had kept him watching, in order to dissuade him from his purpose: nor did the smallest discomposure, either of feature or of voice, be-

tray the unworthy feelings of his heart, while he assured the unsuspecting Earl that his loved Ellen, fearful that the ambassadors, already too suspicious of his faith, would spare no pains to watch his every step, had, on the first public avowal of the decision of the Council, determined to seclude herself a while even from him, determined, in disguise, to follow his forces with the ensuing dawn, and, quitting the direct road of their march, privately travel, with expedition, to the camp of Osbert, of Saxony; and, in the name of her husband, claim his protection; adding, that she had chosen himself her messenger, to entreat her Lord, for the sake of their mutual interest, not to adventure, that night, to her presence, lest they should give more credit to the tale already circulated to his disadvantage.

Some would, perhaps, have doubted the veracity of what the Baron told; but John, of Luxembourg, had never

known a cause to doubt the faith or friendship of the Lord of Lichtenstien, nor did he now. Much did he regret the decision of his Countess, and, by repeated messages, that never reached her, strove to alter it, though much he felt indebted to her generous care, and owned, while he lamented its necessity, the utility of the measure.

Thus waiting till the hour was expired at which his presence amongst his friends was become so absolutely necessary that all his future fortunes hung upon it, he gave to Ulrick's hands a little billet, replete with tenderness for his loved Ellen, and, with a sorrowing heart, bade an adieu to the palace of Lichtenstien.

Scarce had the sun arisen in the west before the train of the young Earl, assembled, in proud array, before the portals of the stately palace of Luxembourg; nor long did they await the appearance of their Lord, who, vaunt-

ing lightly to his saddle, with easy grace, spurred on his stately steed, while the banner of his house, highly emblazoned, beat the winds, unfurled, borne by the hands of the Lord Marshall Stolberg, who led the way, at the head of a noble train of followers, and kindred of renown, towards that quarter of the City nearest to which his lovely Ellen pined away her hours in sad and endless grief. She, as her tear-fraught eye by accident was turned towards her lattice, beheld and knew the ensigns of her Lord; and, overcome by this so public confirmation of her wrongs, fainted upon the floor of her chamber; from which she found herself recovering in the encircling arms of the insidious Ulrick of Lichtenstien, who, in that hour, presumed again to utter his presumptuous adoration, while the unsuspecting Earl, exulting in the hope of soon beholding his loved, absent bride placed on the regal seat of his



great ancestors, gaily lowered his banner as he passed at a little distance from the palace gates; and the compliment, supposed to be paid to Ulrick, was followed by all the youths of his noble House, many of whom, in secret, shared the confidence of his marriage. The fatal morning brought, amongst other sorrows, to the Countess a billet from her Lord: not that, indeed, which he the night before had left for her, but one compiled by the Lord Lichtenstien, more suited to his views: abrupt and cruel were the words in which he there confirmed the certainty of his intention to fulfil the treaty, by wedding with the Lady Hermanfried; coolly derided her credulity that could, even for a moment's space, think he could be undecided on the point of disannulling his first marriage; and hinted that, since his political interests required that his hand should be transferred to Conrad's sister, Lady

Hermanfried, his wish that she should accept the services of his friend, Ulrick of Lichtenstien; concluding by saying, that, should she ever attempt to interpose her claims, instant and most certain death awaited her; nor would he ever cease, in order to prevent the possibility of her succeeding, to watch her most retired moments by means of some bribed, and devoted to his service.

Offended pride and indignation gave her the power to bear this dreadful blow without distraction, and to exert herself beneath the storm of fate that hovered over her head. Determined no longer to abide where every hour teemed but with added insults, she sent to entreat the presence of the Baron, and acquainted him with her intention of quitting, that night, the Palace of Lichtenstien. The Baron listened to her with real concern; for it was a measure so truly unexpected as to promise inconvenience to his

plans. Strongly he entreated her not to think of a measure that would plunge him in the deepest affliction; urged that it was possible the letter might be forged, and John, of Luxembourg, be still sincere. The latter was, indeed, a pleasing, but, alas! improbable conjecture; yet did the Baron raise so many very reasonable objections, that Ellen, who too plainly saw herself utterly within his power, and that, under the semblance of a guest, she was, in fact, a prisoner, dissembling for a while the scorn she felt, and affecting to be a convert to his oft-repeated arguments, she consented to postpone her departure, though secretly resolved to effect her escape the earliest opportunity that should present itself.

Nor were her conjectures wanting of foundation, for soon she found herself, and all her actions, were most heedfully observed, with unremitted caution. Yet, though the Baron sometimes talked of.

love, his manners were, in general, respectful, ever obliging, yet sometimes tinged with an air of gaiety and hope, that shocked her to behold, for it most painfully convinced her he deemed her in his power. The inconsistency of his conduct served but the more to arouse those apprehensions he designed to stifle. Destitute of any one, save Adama, who lacked the power to serve her, in whom she could confide, she solicited the assistance of a youthful page, whose age and situation rendered him little likely to be suspected of lending assistance to her flight; and, habited in his accoutrements, past, in the evening, unsuspected, through the numerous train that nightly thronged the halls of the gay Lord of Lichtenstien. "Thus far," continued the Earl, "her pen has informed me of her afflictions; but, of her present fortunes, I am ignorant. It was my intention, notwithstanding my religious habit, to

have sought the Earl of Saint Paul, and, if I found him wanting in his honor, to seek the reparation of the sword; the only means to appease our slighted House; for never, Almerick, though his whole race were kneeling at my feet, would I consent that Ellen De Courcy should bear the name of him that once forsook her."

"My father," cried the animated Almerick, "my thoughts meet your's, but, henceforth, suffer me to wear upon my sword the honorable task of avenging Ellen's injuries. I should indeed almost have grieved to have found they had met the punishment they merited, had your arm been exposed where I am called on."

"And yet, my son, remember it is possible," replied Lord Monmouth, "that John, of Luxembourg, may still have been the dupe of Ulrick. Three weeks past, just when my messenger, who urged you hither, he sent to me

to ask for news of Ellen, and, as I hear, intends immediately to take his departure for that coast. If you should chance to meet, hear ere you challenge him to combat: and now retire, good Almerick, the power of sleep sits heavy on my eye-lids."

"May Heaven restore my father," sighed De Courcy, "and visit him with health." He closed his curtains and retired to the adjoining chamber, to meditate alone upon the painful theme of Ellen's wrongs.

## CHAPTER XXIII.



THE campaign was now drawing to a conclusion. The Duke of York, from a deficiency in his resources, had been obliged to disband the greater part of his followers, and, being again retired to Ireland, without affecting any material point, Margaret determined to dispose her army into quarters for the approaching winter. Amongst the firm adherents of King Henry's cause, few followed the banners of the red rose of Lancaster with a more fervent zeal than Robert De Bontoure, the gallant Earl of Powis. His life and fortune were at the free disposal of his Sovereign,

and his Castle made choice of for the winter residence of the illustrious pair. Splendor and magnificence surrounded their throne ; and never did the Court appear with greater splendour than beneath its dome : and it was from thence that Margaret determined on the dangerous adventure of visiting, by sea, the Queen Dowager, Catharine, in the stately halls of Narbeth.

Gallantly attended she embarked, from the mouth of the river Dee, on board a royal galley, and escorted by a numerous fleet ; leaving the King, who was well pleased with a life of undisturbed ease and meditation, safe in the well defended Castle of Lord Powis. Her visit to Queen Catharine was, by many, suspected to be less out of affection for her than to afford a means of meeting, unsuspected, the obnoxious John, Duke of Somerset, then at Narbeth ; and whom she had been constrained to send into banish-



ment at the period of Lord Suffolk's fall. His connections with that ambitious nobleman, and other unfavorable circumstances, had rendered him so totally obnoxious to divers of the nobility, even the most strongly affected to her interest, that it demanded more than usual policy to bring him once again into public employment. The event proved the propriety of the idea; for, on her return, the Duke entered the courts of the Castle, by her side, followed by no less a train than four hundred horsemen, in the livery of his House, and left, within a very few miles march, a far more numerous band, who did but want for his commands to join the royal standard.

Scarcely had Margaret, with prosperous gales, lost sight of the romantic coast of Aberistwith, ere a large fleet was discovered standing from Ireland. Strongly did her attendants entreat her

to return, and painted to her the danger of encountering a force so greatly their superior. "Your love," said she, "that makes you fear for me, secures your pardon; but repeat no more, I charge you on your duty: the counsels that I scorn. What, shall Margaret, shall the wife of Henry Plantagenet, fly before the usurping powers of York? No, never. Prepare upon the instant to give them a reception, should they dare approach, such as their bold temerity deserves: but talk no more of shunning them, not as ye prize the favor of your Queen."

It was not long before the banners of York braved those of Lancaster in open fight, and dreadful was the contest. Margaret shrunk not even here, but, in every part, inspired courage by her brave example, though engaged with more than twice their numbers. The Lancastrian fleet so hardily maintained the conflict, that scarcely could

it be resolved on which side fell the victory. The following night compelled them, most reluctantly, to desist from action, and, through the grey mists of the morning's light, they discovered the romantic Isle of Gresham, lying to the left, within the distance of a mile and a half, and thither did their pilot steer his course, while the enemy, in vain, essayed to disappoint his purpose. Still did the Yorkists continue to hover about the upper point of the island, but they, nevertheless, accomplished their landing, favored by the guns from the fort, which continued, by a constant and well directed fire on the enemy's ships, from the north battery, to compel their numerous fleet to keep aloof, while Margaret, and her train, effected their debarkation. Here, too, she was received and loyally entertained by the Nuns of Morna, a religious house of the Benedictine order, and who boasted the foundation of their

house to be by Elama, the daughter and co-heiress of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, who lost so considerable a portion of his ancient inheritance through the conquest of England by the bastard of Normandy.

From Gresham island Margaret crossed the channel, in the afternoon, to Pembroke, and, early in the morning, reached the stately halls of Narbeth. The royal Catharine, totally unapprized of her approach, was sitting, as was her common custom, surrounded by her Ladies of honor, in a spacious gallery, adorned with arras of the finest tapestry, on which was represented the well fought battle of Agincourt; and employed in decorating a costly scarf, of curious texture, for her beloved and amiable son young Owen, upon account of whose so very recent ill treatment, it was easy to observe the coolness of her address to Margaret, though the natural courtesy of her accom-

plished mind rendered her affable and polite to all, but most particularly so to the royal partner of her beloved son, the King, who soon banished the transient cloud of displeasure, that added majesty to her still interesting countenance: and here, too, it was that the amiable Catharine, whose virtues knew how to reclaim even the wild youthful sallies of our gallant Henry the Fifth, presented to the Queen the newly espoused wife of her son, the young Earl of Richmond; and Mary De la Pole once more, with mingled sentiments of delight and wonder, saw, in the beautiful Countess, the lovely Margaret of Somerset, the youthful widow of her brother John.

At night, when the sprightly steps of the dancers trod the mazy rounds of pleasure in the halls of Narbeth, and the melodious notes of the well skilled minstrels swelled into softest harmony, the Countess sought the society of Mary;

and, as they sat retired together from the company, on the low gothic seat of stone that was placed round the sides of the spacious gallery, recounted, to her listening ear, the principal events that had befallen her since their last sad parting at the gates of Kendal Castle; which, after the death of her gallant husband, fell into the destructive hands of some of the numerous enemies of Lord Suffolk's house; and she herself narrowly escaped their vigilant pursuit, by embarking in an open boat at midnight, that lay moored among the rocks behind the ramparts, attended only by one faithful follower, she fled to Workington; from whence, ignorant of her father's place of retreat, she fled to France, and sought protection from her noble kinsman, the Lord of Amiens. It was in his Court that the admiring eyes of the Earl of Richmond first saw, and taught his heart to sigh for the lovely Margaret: and it was

there too that, after time had soothed her sorrow for the early loss of the unfortunate Lord John De la Pole, she gave her hand to the Earl, and, with him, landed once again in England, not many days previous to Margaret's becoming a guest in the halls of Narbeth.

Mary was wiping an unbidden tear, that stole incautious down her cheek, at the recollection of those eventful scenes, when the Queen rose to retire, for the night. The courtly Catharine kept her state; but Sir Owen, in whom the remains of the most perfect manly beauty, and such high accomplishments as might almost excuse even the widow of the graceful Henry the Fifth for having thought him worthy to become his successor in her heart, were still conspicuous, with elegant attention played the host, and, assisted by his son, the Earl of Richmond, conducted

Margaret to her apartments. Mary, but little disposed to taste the downy comforts of repose, seated herself beside her lattice, and strove to tranquillize her anxious thoughts by gazing on the calm, soft scenes before her.

At length Mary sought her couch, and dropped an additional bead for the safety of Almerick De Courcy, who, a stranger to the tender interest he held in her remembrance, counted the days as years till he returned to England, lest the accomplished Jasper of Pembroke should, in his absence, prove a too successful wooer.

Magnificence and pleasure vied with each other in the halls of Narbeth, and every day exceeded the preceding one in the splendour of the banquets and games. The Duke of Somerset, who, in consequence of the marriage of his beauteous daughter, with the Earl of Richmond, was there a welcome guest, was soon reinstated, openly, in Mar-



garet's Royal favor, who, in reality, had never been displeased, though in compliance with the general resentment, it had been deemed expedient to appear so. A fortnight had elapsed since the arrival of the Queen at Narbeth, and having, by her address, succeeded in some of the principal objects of her journey, one of which was to prevail upon Sir Owen Tudor to continue his support to the Lancastrian cause, which, in consequence of his son's too rigorous treatment, he was much apprehended to be upon the point of departing from; she intimated her intention of returning, and in a few days, re-embarked for Powis Castle, with the addition to her retinue of the Duke of Somerset, and his numerous vassals; the Earl and Countess of Richmond, and their suite; the handsome Bachelor Robert De la Zouch; Sir Guy De la Warre; Sir Ralph De Beauchamp, and Ingilram De Hastings,

famed for many a gallant deed who led five hundred archers from the north to join the cause of Lancaster. Sir Owen, attended by three hundred men at arms, escorted Queen Margaret to Pembroke, where she embarked.

After a pleasant and uninterrupted voyage, they once more anchored before the ramparts of Powis Castle, and the high brazen gates stood wide to receive the royal dame, the gallant addition to whose suite, rendered her *entré* rather more like a triumph, yet there were not a few, who had been better pleased to lack the aid she brought, than owe it to the Duke of Somerset. This day was surely destined for one of very singular rejoicing, for scarcely was the banquet served, ere the horn sounded loudly at the northern drawbridge, and the numerous banners, as they beat the air in proud array without the castle wall, bespoke the approach of gallant

company: gallant indeed they were, for no sooner was the portcullis lowered for their admission, than the Prince Edward, mounted on a coal black steed, richly caparisoned with golden trappings, and led by his aid-de-camp, Sir Walter D'Arcy, appeared upon the bridge, and after whom, far as the eye could reach, followed a glorious train of all the choicest flower of the English youth.

The lofty note of the clarions drew the queen to the large painted window that commanded the prospects of the courts of the castle, she knew the ensigns of her son, and forgetting in that hour of fond affection, her regal state, she was about to descend into the hall, when turning, she beheld him entering, and folded, in an instant, in the arms of his illustrious father.

Amid the noble youths who had followed the steps of the Prince of Wales, how many were eagerly sought

for by the fair damsels of the Court of Henry, scarce any gentle dame was there who did not ask, with fond timidity, if he, who held her heart in silken fetters, was arrived safe from the dangers of the perilous war.

Amongst the beauteous circle, Mary De la Pole was almost the only one that stood uninterested, except in the happiness that beamed in the radiant eyes of her fair friends, "mark you not," said the Countess of Richmond, as she leaned familiarly on Mary's arm, "mark you not Mary, yonder knight in the white plumes, whose eyes are bent this way ; know you his name?"

"You mean the gallant Percy, do you not?"

"Oh no, the handsome knight to the left of him, wrapped in the murray coloured mantle, that leans upon his lance, and seems in earnest conference with Pointz ; his features are familiar

to my eyes, and yet his name escapes my recollection."

"It is De Courcy," faintly answered Mary, who had not until that moment observed him, "he is the youthful heir of the House of Monmouth."

"I have heard the imperfect outline of his story," rejoined the Countess, "and might we form our judgment by appearances; I would say he was as amiable as fame reports him brave; he comes this way too, and surely, by the pleasure on his brow, he has not seen my gentle sister with indifference."

Fortunately for Mary, the Countess had not remarked the confusion with which she had drawn down her veil to conceal the crimson blush that dyed her cheek, when Almerick bowed gracefully from the opposite side of the hall, and quitting the arm of Pointz, and making his way through the circle of youthful cavaliers that thronged the presence, was, in a moment, at her side.

The courtly elegance of his address, and the playful ease of the accomplished Countess of Richmond, precluded every ceremonious restraint amongst the charming trio, who, while the Royal Margaret, and her gentle Lord, dispensed a general welcome to their friends; with unfeigned satisfaction, seated themselves within the deep recess of one of the casements behind the throne, and enjoyed an hour of more uninterrupted felicity than rarely falls to the lot of human beings; while Almerick, seated between his beauteous auditors, was relating, with an earnestness that carried a conviction of its truth, the story of his error on the night, when, believing it to be the lady Mary, he followed John of Luxembourg and Ellen from Stratford Castle: and Mary, listening with an attentive smile that gave an equal proof with how much willingness she gave credit to the tale; she chanced to raise

her eyes, and at that moment saw the Earl of Pembroke leaning against an opposite pillar, with his looks bent on them ; he seemed mortified to find he was observed, and taking the arm of the Earl of Richmond, who passed along the hall, was on the point of retiring from the contemplation of a scene so calculated to destroy his too long cherished dream of hope and happiness. De Courcy saw and regretted the air of estrangement on the brow of his friend, and flew to meet him with an unfeigned pleasure, for many a month had passed since they parted : for a moment Pembroke turned away in silence, as if to suppress the conflict struggling in his heart, between jealousy and friendship ; but remembering how nobly Almerick had consented to abide by Mary's choice, he gave his hand, and with that degree of easy grace, known only to

himself, joined in their little party, as did also the happier Earl of Richmond.

But it was in vain that every one endeavoured to conceal their various sentiments; Almerick, (though Mary wore the same soft smile of undissembled friendship, as when they wandered through the woods of Monmouth, nor dreamed of joy or happiness beyond their boundaries,) strove vainly to assume a degree of cheerfulness he did not feel, for he saw the grief that rent the soul of the too ardent Pembroke, and his presaging heart told him he soon should lose the friend he loved; neither could Mary behold herself the fatal cause of indifference between two so congenial to each other's generous mind, without experiencing a degree of sorrow at being so unfortunate as to inspire love, where it was not in her power to repay it.

Shortly after the reinstatement of John of Somerset, Margaret adopted



the impolitic measure of displacing the Earl of Pembroke from the command of the royal army, which arduous station he had filled with most unquestioned honor, and general satisfaction, to bestow it on the Duke, who, proud of vaunting the strength of the forces he had brought from the Scottish marshes, relaxed from the discipline which hitherto had strictly been adhered to, a measure of which the fatal effects were soon but too apparent. At that moment too, the Yorkists, who, the more effectually to lull their enemies into security, had made a feint of retiring into Ireland, were meditating then a blow to the fortunes of the House of Lancaster, which fell with double force, because unthought of.

Meanwhile the Duke of York, far from abandoning his designs of recovering the crown of England, which he undoubtedly regarded as his just inheritance, purposely circulated the

report of being thinly attended in the neighbouring kingdom, the more effectually to deceive the Lancastrians, and by inducing them, with the hopes of an easy victory, to follow him thither in order that by dividing their forces, he might, with better prospect of success, join his powerful adherents in the north of England ; thus, without interruption, was he daily adding strength to his already well appointed army in the neighbourhood of Penrith, in Cumberland, where he was supported by the potent Earls of Westmoreland and Dacre, together with the Bishop of Lincoln and many other noblemen, who vowed their lives and fortunes at his free service ; having, while the Duke of Somerset, lulled in security, was too much lacking in attention to the Court, passed into England, he embarked with those adherents of his cause, at the conflux of the river Dee, and favoured by a prosperous voyage,

reached the bay of Cardigan, from whence, by rapid and secret marches, they bent their way towards the valley of Welch Pool, where they meditated the daring project of surprising the castle of the Lord Powis, and taking, by assault that fortress, and the many noble guests who, with the royal Henry, and his Queen were then its residents.

Under the covert of the night, a band of chosen warriors wound their way amongst the rocks, that rising from the sea nearly the height of three hundred feet perpendicular, seemed, as they darkly frowned above the rolling surge, to bid defiance to the most adventurous assailants; owing to the depth of snow that had drifted during the evening, below the heights, their heavy footsteps passed unheard by the centinels, whom, from a distance they beheld pacing the parapets, by the reflection of the numerous torches that beamed within the courts below. The Duke of York was the first, who, undis-

mayed by the difficulty of the enterprise, first fixed his scaling ladder, while the impatience of his followers became so great, that they began ascending every part before they were half secured, and each contended with his fellow soldier, who should be foremost in the glorious pursuit of death or victory.

The day was just began to break, in faint light streaks of pallid grey across, the eastern hemisphere, when Richard De Bullion gained the summit of the wall of the red castle, and at a part where, from the insufficiency of the centinels that held the guard, the whole of his brave companions might have entered, had it not been prevented by his eagerness; elated with success, he called aloud to those who followed him with breathless expedition, to assist him in the glorious act, of planting on the walls the banners of the white rose, their shouts of victory, which the Duke

essayed in vain to moderate, alarmed those within the fortress, who strove to repair the ill effects of their too great reliance on their security, instantly gave the alarm, and rushed to arms from every quarter, and on that day the generous Pembroke, forgetting the affronts he had received, nobly surmounted every sense of offended valor, and fought in the station of a common soldier, beneath the command of John of Somerset.

The brave De Bullion shamed that so secure a conquest should be lost by his too eager joy, vowing no more to behold the face of the Duke of York, if he returned not a conqueror, with a degree of courage almost unexampled, leaped from the wall into the Court of the castle, followed by a few brave and adventurous spirits, who, like himself, held death preferable to defeat, and the acclamations of his applauding soldiers, rent the air with

praises, and the Duke, who highly prized the lives of every one of his adherents, instantly ordered an attack to be commenced upon the castle gates, in order to force their way through every obstacle, to the aid of De Bullion, and in this hazardous enterprize, none were more active than the youthful Earl of March. Margaret, whose presence of mind was never absent in the hour of danger, and perceiving, but too plainly all was lost, prevailed upon the King to retire from the castle by a secret postern, lest he by untoward fate, should fall into the hands of York; to this arrangement, his natural aversion to such scenes of havoc, made him most readily consent, and under the escort of a small but faithful band, he retired from the castle, while the Queen, by a well-timed sally, encompassed the legions of York, and cut off their return. Long did the battle rage with merciless havoc,

and many were the gallant veterans on both sides that lay stretched upon the ensanguined plain. The gallant Richard De Bullion, whose valor gained the praise of even his enemies, covered with honourable wounds, and fainting with exertion, lived but to grasp the hand of the Earl of March, and expired on the spot where his high brandished weapon had, of late, dealt death and ruin round him.

The desperate condition to which the bands of York found themselves reduced, redoubled their fury, no effort, that the hardest valor, aided by unshrinking resolution could suggest, was left untried to render themselves masters of the castle, but they contended against men as much inured to danger as themselves, and finding it impossible to effect their purpose, a part of them, with desperate courage, and as if defying the almost inevitable

fate that hovered over them, fought their way through the opposing swords of their enemies, and, amidst showers of arrows, shot from the loop holes of the towers, effected their retreat to their ships, though with the much regretted loss of more than half their fellows left in bondage. The winds were favourable, and the Duke of York, who had beheld his high raised hopes thus blighted in the moment of imagined security, retired into the bay of Dundalk, where they rode in safety.

Margaret, believing them fully departed from the kingdom, was yet prevailed on, from the supposition that other favorers of their cause might meditate a similar attack upon the castle, which, from the very considerable damage it had sustained, it was judged impossible to withstand, abandoned it, and on the evening following the battle, she followed the route of her royal Lord, attended only by such of her



train, as could, with convenience be provided for, and laying her commands upon the Duke of Somerset to follow without delay, who readily obeyed the summons, and at the head of the greater part of the military force, depart ere the morning.

The command of the red castle thus devolved, for a second time, to the Earl of Pembroke, but in a condition so little likely to make an honourable resistance, that he judged it more essential to join the royal army, assembling in the north, than to continue there.

Margaret, in her peremptory removal from Welch pool, had left the greater number of her ladies in the castle, who, uncertain of her route, (for it was reported variously in order to deceive the enemy, should they form the bold idea of intercepting her progress) were left in a total uncertainty with regard to her place of destination ;

but the Lord Pembroke, whose gallantry was equal to his valor, held it incumbent on himself to remain at Powis Castle, until they were severally disposed, according to their pleasure, and to provide, as much as possible, for their safe conduct.

It was now that Mary De la Pole, felt, with accumulated anguish, the loss of friends, to whom was she to fly—without a father's stately roof to welcome her return—without that brother, whose fond heart had gladly yielded up his life to serve her—deserted by the Queen, and in the protection of a slighted lover, how much was she dependent on his generosity; well did she know, indeed, that to her uncle of Norfolk, she never could have come an undesired guest; but Norfolk's Duke was linked, as firmly now, to the House of York, as her heart was to that of Lancaster; yet even had she surmounted the reluctance she ex-

perienced, to owe her safety to her Sovereign's foe, even though her kinsman, and on every other subject, ever loved almost before her too austere father, she knew not if her native country was still his home, and of the death of the Duchess, fame, who delights to circulate the tale of sorrow, had long since informed her.

The noble Pembroke observed with regret, the melancholy that possessed her mind, and with the utmost delicacy entreated her to permit him to conduct her once again to Narbeth, where in the honourable train of his royal mother, the Queen Catharine, envy itself could not assail her conduct, she accepted the proposal with most unfeigned pleasure, and the ensuing morn was fixed for her departure.

To this arrangement a very unexpected alarm threatened an interruption, borne on the wings of fidelity to Earl, the darksome night impeded not

the steps of him he honoured by the name of friend ; it was past the hour of midnight, that, as the sentinel slowly paced the rampart, that he heard

“ With high steps and prancing proud,  
The war-horse shake the rattling grate,  
Clattering his clanking armour loud,  
Alights a warrior at the gate.”

It was the young Sir Maufrid De Clinton, who, though devoted to the service of the Earl of March, possessed too noble a mind to hear the Earl of Pembroke, doomed to fall by private treachery, and not, by warning him to shun the danger, endeavour to acquit the debt of gratitude he owed for forfeit life, given by his generous hand ; by him the Earl was informed, that still supposing Henry and his Queen to be inhabitants of Powis Castle, and, trusting that in its defenceless state, it must become an easy conquest to them. The Earl of March, and some few

chosen friends, still hovered near the valley, and meditated to surprise the castle by means of the treachery of some bribed, to assist the attempt the following night. Much did the heart of Pembroke wish to gain the noble minded Manfred to the interests of his House, but generosity forbade the attempt; steady and unshaken in his principles was the young Knight. In the field of war his arm would not, perhaps, have shunned even Pembroke's, but his soul scorned the despicable measures adopted to ensnare a noble foe.

Though not without indignation, the Earl beheld himself thus placed in a situation where, from want of aid, his former laurels were in danger of being torne from his brow, he determined to defend the place even to the very last extremity, and rather set fire to it with his own hand, than suffer it to fall into the hands of Edward of March.

Mary, from the balcony of the Castle, had witnessed the entrance of Sir Manfred: his eager pace and earnest entreaty to be conducted to the presence of Pembroke, had taught her to expect some news of moment. The hum of busy preparation in the courts, the animated steps of the soldiers, and the more than usual air of business of importance in the Castle, induced her to descend to learn the cause; and she had more than half endangered the honor of Lord Pembroke, by urging him to abandon a resolution so fraught with evident peril to his person, and to so little purpose.

“And is it possible,” exclaimed the impassioned Jasper, “that Lady Mary feels an interest in my safety? Whole years of service were, by far, too little to merit such reward. I will not stay since you would have it otherwise; your pleasure shall dispose my destiny. Yet let me pause . . . What then will

Edward say ? that Pembroke fled before him. Death is in that thought. Never, by yon bright Heaven, shall he have cause to alter it. Yet, gentle Lady Mary, I should grieve that one whose soul is turned, like your's, to mercy's softest strain, should be exposed to such a perilous scene : permit me then to conduct you hence on the instant. Before this hour to-morrow Pembroke, perchance, is doomed to breathe his last. Let me not, though I lack your love, be wholly unremembered as your friend. At the little cottage, where once it was my happy lot to find you, thither fly. To behold you in the power of the Earl of March, would be indeed distraction."

Mary involuntarily trembled at the idea ; so did she at the rage that shook the soul of Pembroke at its bare contemplation. " How," said she, with accents calculated to have shaken his

rash resolves, "could you, who feel so much even at the thoughts of other's sufferings support that lot yourself?"

"I am prepared against it, Lady," he answered, after a pause, in which his eyes expressed the gratitude her solicitude inspired. "I would not live an hour beyond my honor, unless it were with a hope of rescuing you."

"It is my purpose to depart, my Lord, even with the rising dawn; but I must go alone. The service of the King, your royal brother, claims your presence here, and I should blush to call you from it even for an hour. May fortune favor you; I take my leave."

"Your wish gives earnest of success. Lady farewell," exclaimed the fascinated Pembroke, while his eyes still pursued her, as she retired along the lengthened galleries, and left him to regret.

It was noon before she left the Castle, escorted by a small party of military



vassals, and took the way to the Cottage on the Cliffs. The distance was but little above six miles ; and, knowing full well how ill the Castle was prepared to make defence, she could not help regretting that Lord Pembroke had diminished it, by sending some of his bravest soldiers to protect her person. She had, in vain, endeavoured to convince him their attendance was unnecessary ; but, with them, her rhetoric was more persuasive. Obedience to the orders of the Earl made them, for a few moments, hesitate to adopt the proposal that they should return, yet was it easy to perceive that the first anxious wish of every heart was to die fighting in their general's cause ; and, after having conducted her beyond the main road, where she was most likely to encounter interruption from the numerous mauraunders that infested the coast, they left her to pursue her way, attended only by her

woman, Anna, and bore, as a token to the Earl, by which she prayed him to forgive the disobedience she had caused his followers to commit, a ring of curious workmanship.

Charmed with the beauties of the fast approaching evening, she heeded not the rapid flight of time; but, deviating from the beaten path, the more to enjoy the enchanting wildness of the scenes around her, she slowly wandered on, till, insensibly, she found herself advanced almost to the centre of a noble wood, that, rising to the southward, skirts the valley.

As they had sent their palfreys back to the Castle, they experienced, in a severe degree, the consequences of such unusual fatigue; yet did necessity compel them to advance, till the encreasing gloom that, aided by the wide spread branches of the oak, and towering cedar, early spread around them, compelled them to desist from their ineffec-

tual endeavours to regain the path they had lost. A ruined arch way of a half dismantled tower, almost the only vestige now remaining of a once noble edifice, fast falling to decay, received the wearied form of Mary, and her ever faithful Anna, to its welcome, though imperfect shelter, till the rising beams of Cynthia gilt, with her silvery beams, the pine trees waving heads, and once more they pursued their tedious way.

It was not long before the hour of midnight that they emerged once more from its thick covert, and, by winding of the river, as it wound its way among the frowning rocks discovered that they were entering upon the valley; a very different part to that whither it had been their intention, in the early part of the day to repair to, and that they had still a considerable distance to pass before they reached the cottage.

All nature seemed hushed in silence, save where the melancholy owl, from some lorn spot, sent forth her dismal knell, which, ever and anon, broke on the ear with most forboding moan, as if, in opposition to the soft warblings of the nightingale, who poured her soft notes on the ear of night, and, almost imperceptibly robbed Mary's throbbing heart of half its sorrows, by lulling her, in sweet forgetfulness of her situation.

Much did the gentle wanderers congratulate themselves when they reached the remembered copse that marked the path way leading to the humble dwelling of Richard and Martha. "How happy," exclaimed Mary, "will it make the affectionate Eglantine to behold us once again the guests of her good parents. Within an hour, Anna we shall reach their hospitable door. Alas! how very small a portion of my days have past with that tranquillity that calmed my agitated heart in this

retreat. Short, indeed, were their continuance; and long, ah! very long, does my presaging bosom whisper me, will be the time ere peace again shall be its happy inmate."

"Ha! soft," cried Anna, as she grasped the arm of her fair mistress, with a trembling hand; "see ye not yon pale form that comes across the heath: Saint Cuthbert guard us—See, it comes this way!"

"Haste from the path," exclaimed the affrighted Mary, "surely it is the wandering spirit of some departed soul, or is it that some funeral shall shortly pass this way? Good angels guard us from all ill spirits that infest the night, and grant repose to such as lack of rest. Mark, Anna, where it softly glides away towards the west... It stops again... Ha! how fearfully it starts, as if appalled on the sudden. Heaven, in this dreadful hour, protect thy helpless servants." Claspings her rosary in

her trembling hands, the affrighted maid threw herself on her knees; nor dared again to raise her downcast eyes, lest they should again behold the shadowy form of one that was no more; till Anna, uttering a piercing shriek, fell on the earth, extended, in an enviable insensibility; and, at the moment, the sound of footsteps, light as the gossamor, rushed hastily across the path. Mary, unable to withhold the impulse, caused by fear, for an instant raised her fearful eye, and, almost at her side, beheld the same tall pallid form that had before appalled her even at a distance.

Almost deprived of reason, it was long ere she possessed the power to use a single effort for the recovery of Anna; and, when she did so, found them ineffectual. In speechless agony she knelt on the damp earth, beside the lifeless maid, and, covering her face within her robe, uttered full many a

prayer to all the saints of Heaven, and feared, in every passing gale that rustled through the grass, the approach of unknown terrors.

Thrice had the cheerful crowing of the village cock proclaimed the approach of day, when Anna, with a heavy sigh, once more unclosed her eyes, and fixed them, with a look of anxious thankful tenderness upon her beauteous mistress, who hung over her in tears. “ Ah ! Lady, have you since beheld the fearful form ? ” asked Anna, with a tone of earnest anxiety, as she raised her from her lowly bed.

“ Name it not, Anna, I shudder at the sound : never since have I presumed to raise my unhallowed eyes. Thanks to our Lady, the dawn already begins to dawn upon us ; if you are able to walk we will remove from hence. Sure I am we are but a little distance from the cottage : would to Heaven we could reach its hospitable wicket.”

The sun was just emerging from a parted cloud, that slowly rolled away towards the ocean, and his first radiant beam shed its enlivening rays upon the empurpled heath ; while the clear dew drops glittered, as they fell from the pointed thorn, no trace was visible of human being ; and the lowing herds browsed peacefully upon the mountain's brow. The long oppressed hearts of the fair Mary, and her young companion, glowed with the enthusiastic ardor that such a scene was calculated to inspire them with. " Surely, in such a place as this," cried Mary, " so richly favored by the hand of Heaven, no evil spirit could have power to harm?"

" May the saints grant it has not," answered the half incredulous Anna, " and yet..."

" I understand you : the figure that this night crossed over that path way was not the creature only of our fancy."



“ Too certainly it was not. Ha! look, the door of the cottage opens. It is William ! He comes, as he was wont, to drive the young goats to the mountain : but, ah ! he comes not with the sportive steps of thoughtless happy youth ; slow and sad is his pace as he winds adown the cliff, and silent hangs his pipe at his side. Hasten, Anna, we will meet him, and learn the story of his woe. Heaven grant last night did not foretell the tale.”

William, with modest diffidence, saluted Mary, as soon as he perceived her, and a momentary smile usurped the place of sadness, but faded like the flattering sunshine of an April morn. He hastily turned his little flock a different way, while the tear stood in his eye, and it was so visible that he wished to avoid enquiry, that she forbore to stay him. With a presaging heart she pursued her way to the door of the cottage, lifted the latch, and once more

found herself, with joy, beneath its lowly roof: but greatly, alas! was the scene changed since she was its inhabitant. The poultry, that were wont to receive their daily food from the hand of Eglantine, and wait her coming forth with watchful eyes, were feeding, indeed, as usual, round the door before which their meal had evidently been recently plentifully sprinkled, but Eglantine was absent: all within was sad and silent, and Mary, with a firm conviction that she should hear her youthful guileless favorite was no more, seating herself with Anna on the little bench in the porch, round which the roses bloom in thick luxuriance, awaited the appearance of her hosts with much impatience.

Not many minutes had elapsed before her ear caught the remembered tones of Eglantine's voice, wildly warbling an old provincial ditty from above, in the most melting strains of melan-

choly; and soon after she descended, leaning, with her hand, upon the shoulder of her mother, whose looks spoke resignation to Heaven's will: her golden hair flew, unconfined, upon her own, and half concealed her face: for a moment she fixed her eyes on Mary, but soon withdrew them, and, as if unconscious of her being present, resumed her plaintive lay. Martha, with a tear of mingled joy and sadness, welcomed her unexpected guest with unfeigned hospitality, who as cordially returned her congratulations: she took, too, the passive hand of the fair Eglantine, who knew her not, and discovered, with the heaviest regret, the fatal ravages that grief had wrought upon her memory: for her replies were such as far too plainly proved her loss of reason; and the soft smile that once beamed sensibility and love, was now, alas! the truly painful smile of vacancy.

Martha perceived the shock this unexpected scene produced on Mary's spirits, and endeavoured, though in vain, by assuming a degree of fortitude foreign to her heart, to set an example to her gentle guest.

Eglantine, though unable to recollect her, still appeared much attached to Mary, and, as she leaned her aching head upon her shoulder, talked of the death of her lamented father and brother till the tears fell from her languid eyes: it was a relief to which, for many days, she had been a stranger, and much was hoped from the favorable change. Alas! how soon are the delusive rays of hope extinguished. "See, Eglantine," said Mary, "there is a little kid at the wicket, whose dam has forsaken it; will you not help me to nurse it?"

"Poor little wretch," she answered, with a sigh of soft compassion, "I would if I was able; but . . ."

“Nay, but you think too deeply—Will you not go with me?”

“You are so good to me that I will attempt it, though, indeed, my head is very, very much disturbed;” and she layed one hand upon her snowy forehead, while Mary placed the other on her arm, and led her gently towards the cottage door. “If you see Claude de Lernois,” said she, looking earnestly round, to see if her mother was within hearing. “You must avoid him, or he will stab you to the heart, as he did my poor lost father.”

“Surely it was not him that did it, Eglantine?” said Mary; for, from the partial character she had ever heard of the young De Lernois, she could not readily believe a tale so fraught with horror.”

“Indeed, indeed he did,” she answered, and shook her head mournfully; “never shall I forget it, though

they they would very fain persuade me it was not so."

"May God forgive him," cried Mary, "for he has a heavy sin to answer for, who has overthrown a mind so fraught with every benevolent virtue as thine was till that fatal hour. Look, Eglantine," she added, wishing to change the theme, "that youth is robbing us of our kid: see, he carries it down the mountains, wrapped in his bosom."

The fair maid leaned over the wicket to look after her little nursling, and, uttering the name of Claude, with the accents of unutterable anguish, relapsed again into more wild disorder than hitherto she had shown since Mary first beheld her.

Melancholy, indeed, was the eventful story of the woes of Claude and Eglantine. It had been his fate, in a recent engagement, to draw his sword in the service of the Lancastrians, while Richard, no longer able to dispute the

duty which, as his vassal, he owed to his Lord, had been compelled to join the bands of York, to whose fortunes Sir Marmiduke Fitz-Hugh, who had lately purchased those lands from the Lord Powis, was devoted. His courtle-axe closed with that of the young Claude De Ternois in the battle; but he turned it aside, for he shuddered at the thought of wounding the loved son of his adoption. Often did each witness, with honest pride, the valiant actions of the other; but, long ere night, the eyes of Richard closed in honorable, though too early death; he fell almost at the same moment that a ponderous stone, whizing from the arm of a slinger, stretched his son James, who fought by the side of Claude, a breathless corpse upon the ensanguined plain.

Claude, even in the battle's heat, remembered Eglantine, and sighed for the accumulated miseries that must wring

her tortured heart when this sad tale was told. Little could he do, yet what he could he did; he fought over the bodies of his fallen friends, nor quitted the spot, though at the repeated hazard of his life to maintain it. He preserved them from being buried amongst the number of their brave comrades, who fell that fatal day, and entreated leave of his commander to take upon himself the melancholy task of bearing them, the following evening, to the Cottage on the Cliff.

Martha was spinning at the door, and asking a young soldier, who stood near her, news of the army of York, while Eglantine leaned on her mother's chair, and listened with attention. It was just at that moment that Claude came slowly across the church yard path, followed, at a distance, by some youthful friends, bearing the loved remains of Richard, and his beloved James, on the same mournful bier.



They rose, with undissembled joy, to welcome him, and the youth, hurrying Martha, and his lovely Eglantine, into the cottage, attempted to explain the meaning of the mournful train, who were, by that time, slowly ascending the steep winding path that led to the humble dwelling: but the natural tenderness of his heart rendered Claude unequal to the dreadful task of relating the untimely fall of her beloved kindred to the maid, whose joys and sorrows ever were his own; and, from the agonized afflictions of Martha, he shrunk appalled.

In that sad hour he told the story to his youthful comrade William, and prayed him to prepare his ill-starred friends for scenes of sorrow, which he felt himself unable to support. Long, unsuspected by Claude, had William felt an ardent passion for the beautiful Eglantine, and he believed that, to her

preference for his friend, alone was owing the cold indifference with which she had ever listened to his vows : treachery found admittance to his tongue, and, while Martha wept in agony over the lifeless forms of her loved son and husband, he drew the weeping maid aside, and wounded her ear with the insidious and horrid tale, that the sword of Claude still reaked with the blood of her father.

Unable to endure his sight, yet dreading to assign the fatal reason of her abhorrence to her mother, she strove to draw her to their little chamber ere his return. Almost at that instant Claude appeared at the door, and, perceiving them about to retire, he paused, being desirous to spare them and himself a scene replete with misery. This action was, to Eglantine, a confirmation of his guilt. Struggling with her feelings, yet unable to subdue them, she uttered a deep groan, and sunk upon

the floor; while the unhappy Martha shuddered with fear lest she should lose this last surviving blessing Heaven had spared to lighten her afflictions.

From the eyes of Claude, which followed her with fond solicitude, Eglantine turned with hate and deadly fear; and William, triumphant in his success, whom she permitted, without reluctance, to bear in his circling arms from the sad scene before her. Yet short, alas! was his joy; for a few short hours discovered the entire deprivation of her reason, and her incoherent ramblings explained the fatal error that had caused it.

The truly unfortunate Claude was compelled to resign even the melancholy satisfaction of beholding her he loved, except by stealth; for, every time she saw him, she relapsed, if possible, into more acute agonies. He obtained, however, permission from his leader (for he had been for some time

reproved from the Earl of Pembroke) to pass some weeks in the valley, and his hours were devoted to the assistance of Martha, or following her lovely daughter, unobserved, in order to protect her in the lonely rambles that it was her delight to take amidst the neighbouring woods; or often on the steep impending rocks, that, hanging over the foaming waves below them, threatened, at every step, a fearful death.

At the moment that he had occasioned her last relapse, he had been for some time watching about the cottage, in order to take in some logs of wood, which he had brought from the forest for Martha's use, to save her the labour of bearing it herself; but, just as he was about to enter with it, he saw Eglantine coming forth with Mary; and, preferring her tranquillity before the gratification of speaking to her, he hastily retired down the cliff, to conceal himself where he might see her

pass. The pitiful bleatings of the forsaken kid induced him to lift it over the pales, in order to convey it to his sister to take care of, for he knew that it had once belonged to Eglantine's flock, which now grazed in the valley, under her brother's care, from whom the little wanderer, accustomed to the house, had strayed away : the human action delayed him, and was the cause of much distress, where he alone sighed to give consolation.

The day had not yet reached its meridian on which the Earl of Pembroke had promised to follow Lady Mary to the cliffs, before he came, with all a lover's haste, and faithful to his word. The report of the attack, meditated by the Earl of March, had been unfounded, but propagated by himself (and credited by Sir Marmiduke), the better to effect his progress towards London, by detaining the Lord Pembroke at Powis Castle, whom he, with reason, appre-

hended would, if acquainted with his real designs, give them some interruption. A gallant train of horsemen followed him, in order to escort the Lady Mary to the halls of Narbeth with honor; and, on that evening, she bade a reluctant farewell to the cottage, with many a tear shed for the ill-starred fate of Eglantine and Claude.

During the few days that Mary had been in the valley, her mind had been so occupied in the afflictions of her humble friends, that she had not, till now, observed two of her rings were missing from her hand; but that which she regretted most, was one she had when last she parted from, and consented to receive, as the pledge of the absent De Courcy's faith.

She recollected that which she had sent to Lord Pembroke as a security for the pardon of his vassals, whom her entreaty, joined to their natural attachment to his person, had tempted to

disobey him, and determined to ask him to restore it ; for, having employed it from a mere motive of justice, she did not wish it to be looked on as a gift of favor ; nor was she without some fears of having given the one she never meant to part with.

Fearful of betraying the interest she took in the little bauble, she endeavoured to make the inquiry with a greater degree of indifference than she felt : but Pembroke, whom love had taught to be suspicious, penetrated through the veil, and convinced, by her reluctance to acknowledge it, that the ring concerned De Courcy, denied being in possession of it. Mary, though somewhat doubtful of the truth, yet recollected that, on the night she had been so much alarmed by the imagined spectre, that had annoyed her approach to the cottage, she had dropped her rosary and tablets in the grass, which

William finding by accident, as he brought his young goats through the valley, had restored to her, as he did also, at the same time, her peace of mind, by assuring that the form that had so much alarmed her was the poor hopeless Eglantine, who often, at that hour, would leave her bed, to wander round the paths through which her feet had followed her lamented father and brother to their last cold place of rest : and oft did Mary herself observe the almost nightly wanderer, while Claude, or her brother William, watched her at a distance, lest interruption should have fatal consequences. To him, too, Mary was indebted for the restoration of several little ornaments of value, and hoping that De Courcy's ring might yet be recovered by his means, commanded a strict search of it to his care, and was not without hopes of its success.

At Narbeth her reception was such



as might well have been expected from a Princess possessed of Catharine's amiable disposition. With her she was well assured of a secure asylum from the storms of fortune ; for, exclusive of the fair esteem which Mary's unaspiring merits claimed, Catharine was not a stranger to the sentiments of Pembroke's soul, and earnestly did she desire to see his suit succeed. Nothing was left untried that might amuse the mind of her fair guest ; who, most sincerely grateful for the kind condescensions of her noble hostess, strove to reward the many obligations heaped upon her by cheerfully accepting them.

Mirth and unclouded gaiety reigned within the walls of Narbeth. The chase was succeeded by the splendid banquet, " where festive joy laughed in the mantling goblet, and the night, illumined by the tapers' sprightly beams, rivalled departed day ;" while the wild warbling harp echoed beneath the

minstrels' skilful hands along the vaulted roofs, and animated the sportive steps of the revellers.

Dangerous, indeed, were hours like these for Pembroke's resolutions. Never before, since Mary's eyes had fixed his wandering heart, had he experienced such felicity. He seemed to forget that he was not rewarded by her love, and that he had been frequently assured her mind could know no change; and, if unbidden, it would rush to his remembrance; still would he struggle to deceive himself with hopes that time might change the purposes of his fair enslaver. Thus circumstanced, is it to be wondered at if he forgot his friend De Courcy, and the engagements he had given his honor to hold sacred? But Mary De la Pole did not forget De Courcy, "whose image was engraven on her heart." She had, indeed, been happier if she had done so, for rumour's tongue had spread a tale of

scandal that he resigned his hours, once employed with greater honor in King Henry's service, to the devotion of the fair, but frail, Agatha De Rousillon.

This story had been related to Mary by the Queen, who, having been recently defeated in an engagement, led by the potent Earl of Warwick, had hastily retreated towards Wales, in order to draw together new forces to oppose the rapid progress of the arms of York; and, in her way back to the army, she rested, for a few days, in the halls of Narbeth. Nor did she tell it with a desire to inflict pain, but to prepare Mary for an event that she had little reason to doubt of. Her marriage with Lord Pembroke had ever been, and still continued to be, her darling object; nor was she, perhaps, sorry that the inconstancy of De Courcy might probably forward such an event more than all her endeavours.

## CHAPTER XXIV.



THE Lady Agatha De Roussillon had long been followed by the young Godfrey Fitz-Williams, a youth of a noble house, and expectations equal to his birth : his kindred, from a private contention, of long continuance, looked with displeasure on the prospect of an alliance with the family of De Roussillon. Their united opposition had somewhat weakened the assiduities of the courtly Godfrey, and Lady Agatha ill brooked the loss of so accomplished a follower from her numerous train of gay admirers. She thought no lure

more likely to recall the wanderer than a rival, whom he might hold capable of eradicating any partiality he might have created in her heart; and it was, while revolving this important business, that she forgot her bead-roll, and stood, leaning negligently against one of the gothic pillars of Saint Winifred's Convent, thinking alternately of her renegade lover, and her enchanting attitude, that her eyes fell by accident upon De Courcy; who, little observant of her studied graces, heeded her not, but continued to converse with a young cavalier, his friend, behind the confessional of the Father Nicholas. The stranger was, however, less insensible to her attractions, and questioned Almerick as to her name and quality, who, as he raised his eyes, encountered her's, and, with a modest grace, returned the salute she honored him with, with most profound respect. The form of Almerick, and the native nobleness

of his air was not diminished by the mild pensive smile, which from the habitual melancholy of his heart, beamed from his eyes, even in his happiest hours, and the tones of his voice were blended, at once, with manly sensibility and softness, the recollection of these circumstances induced the lady Agatha De Roussillon to select him; as an object formed by nature, to torment the fickle Godfrey Fitz-Williams.

The idea once formed, was soon adjusted, and except, when now and then she cast a side long glance to observe if he still kept his station, she joined, with a tolerable degree of composure, in the appearances of devotion; but she did not forget, by a very fortunate stumble over her cushion, to engage the attention of De Courcy, and though the inconvenience she experienced was very inconsiderable, it served very well as a pretence for

accepting the arm which common courtesy obliged him to offer her.

Her triumph was complete, when, as they went together, slowly through the cloisters, in their way to the palace, they passed Fitz-William, whose countenance bespoke him to be less the philosopher than the lover.

The following day the Lady De Roussillon kept her chamber, as she thought proper to assert on account of indisposition, occasioned by the accident, and Godfrey Fitz-William, whom jealous love brought early to her apartments, was denied admittance; though, ere many hours elapsed, he was convinced that Almerick De Courcy was not treated with such rigour.

These were considered as circumstances that left no doubt of a very tender regard subsisting between him and the Lady Agatha. The fair dames of the Court, who whispered it at first in confidence to each other, soon ceased

to observe that caution, until in a short time, Margaret was informed of the expected alliance between the elegant De Roussillon, and young De Courcy, nor did the lady disavow the conquest ascribed to her, for she considered that should her endeavours fail to retrieve the attentions of Fitz-Williams, the House of Monmouth would be no alliance of dishonor.

Far from opposing, Margaret, who rejoiced at the arrangement, in secret aided the prospects of her favorite, which she hoped by wounding the pride of Mary De la Pole, would soon, perchance, induce her to revenge herself upon De Courcy by becoming Countess of Pembroke.

De Courcy, as free from vanity as from inconstancy, was the last person who perceived that Lady Agatha wore a more welcome smile for him than others who were acknowledged to aspire to her favor: she had, indeed,



adopted a most excellent expedient to attach him to her party, by speaking to him continually of Mary, for whom she professed the most enthusiastic friendship and esteem. Almerick, on such a theme, "could talk down summer suns," without discovering he was the only person interested in the conversation, or that his very frequent appearance with the wily Agatha, planted daggers in the agitated bosom of Fitz-William.

Nevil first undertook to make him sensible of the unpleasant embarrassments into which he was so unwarily suffering himself to be drawn. "Why is it De Courcy," he asked, as they sauntered in the night, towards the camp together, after he had found him conversing gaily, as usual, with the Lady Agatha, at the Queen's supper; "why is it, that of late, I behold you so studious to gain the smiles of Agatha De Roussillon?"

“ I studious to gain the smiles of Lady Agatha, Nevil, whence could proceed the supposition ? Trust me,” he answered warmly, “ it is an honor I aspire not to possess.”

“ Pardon me, but I had supposed you did,” replied his friend.

“ But that I knew the tongue of Nevil is not used to alter what his heart does not believe, I would say you knew De Courcy much too well,” replied the youthful Lord, “ to think he could, even for a moment’s space, forget the Lady Mary De la Pole.”

“ Of that De Courcy, I am little formed to judge, though some appearances speak otherwise ; but (or report goes false) it is more than probable, the noble Jasper of Pembroke, may render you forgotten by the Lady Mary, and should he do so, (pardon the freedom, which my wishes for your happiness occasions) you may console

yourself with having given him no small assistance."

"By heaven!" exclaimed DeCourcy, "should the Lord Pembroke, whose friendship next your own I prize the dearest, dare to attempt to do me injury there, this sword shall teach him to repent the treachery, or I will lose the life no longer worth my care; but say, for yet I understand them not, what are the meaning of the hints you give me? Why start a thought that I would ever resign my pretensions to the Lady Mary? Never, while this heart shall beat, will I resign them."

"But may it not, De Courcy, then be necessary, in order to convince her of your faith, that you resign your newly formed acquaintance; you look as though you comprehended not; I mean the Lady Agatha De Roussillon, to whom the whispers of the Court affirm your heart to have been captive long in willing bands."

“The whispers of the Court are then erroneous, Sir,” replied De Courcy, “and you, I think, might know me better than to heed them lightly, for, by my soul, not even yourself is less attached to the Lady Roussillon than I am; but I waste time in trifles, when composed to the weight of care you have heaped upon my mind. What says report of Pembroke? Should he deceive, by the saints I swear, I will not survive the hour that gives the beauteous Mary to his arms; not all our friendship; no, by the Heaven’s above, not even her entreaties.”

“Your rage,” cried Nevil, as he took his arm, “transports you beyond the bounds of prudence: we are observed: this way, we will talk further on the subject.”

“Oh! you know not the thousandth part of the agonising doubts you have awakened in my soul; do with me as you list; I yield me to your friendship;

but Mary, surely the gentle mind of Mary, cannot be prone to change on light surmises."

Of this however, De Courcy had, ere long, an opportunity to form a more decided opinion, when he followed the Queen to St. Briavails, in the lofty forest of Dean, whither she had repaired from Narbeth, to join the forces daily expected to assemble there, under the banners of the Lord Clifford, whose hands were afterwards stained by the guiltless blood of the infant Rutland, whom, on the day that the Duke his father lost his life, at the memorable battle of Wakefield, he cruelly stabbed to the heart, in revenge, as he said, for the death of his own Father, by the hand of the Duke.

Saint Briavals Castle was a noble gothic pile, strongly fortified and flanked with bastions of considerable strength; toward the north and western sides, behind which rose, in proud

ascent, the stately forest of Dean. . It had, in distant times, been in possession of the ancient house of Montacute, but, after passing through many families, it was now a part of the rich inheritance of the Clifford's, who had not, however, for many a revolving year, made it their residence ; its halls were spacious, and still displayed tokens of the great magnificence of its lord, but it was dark, gloomy, and capable of inspiring the mind with secret dismay : it was here that, after paying his duty to the Queen, who, though she knew full well how to estimate the service of his sword, would gladly have dispensed with his attendance, that Almerick De Courcy sought to behold the idol of his hopes, who, seated at a large marble table at the further end of the hall, beneath a gothic window, highly emblazoned with the armoreal bearings of the Lords Montacute, and their proud alliances, was engaged at

chess with the Earl of Richmond, and Pembroke, stretched in happy indolence, reposed on the matted bench that surrounded the apartment, was playing with the pearl tassels that adorned her robe of black velvet, which flowing round her on the marble pavement, added, if possible, new graces to the natural elegance of her slender form.

The animated brow of Pembroke, little bespoke a mind oppressed by her indifference, and Almerick's doubts were fixed beyond the reach of hope, "it is even then as Nevil said," he cried, "my duty to my Sovereign forced me from her, and Pembroke has poorly and basely robbed me of a prize, the wealth of worlds could never make amends for." Wrapped in gloomy reflections, he stood retired with folded arms, and many a heart-felt sigh, and often did his eye dart an

impatient look towards the happy Pembroke, until suddenly awakened from his reverie, by a soft voice that welcomed his arrival, he started, and beheld the sprightly Countess of Richmond, "doubtless, Sir Almerick," she cried, "I find you in a happy hour. I seek the lady Mary, you, I question not, can best direct me to her."

"She is not far distant, lady: the Earl of Richmond, and your happy brother-in-law, Lord Pembroke, are her companions."

"Did I not know," she answered with a smile, "that you love Jasper, well, I would say you envied him: are you not for their party?"

"Pardon me, gentle dame, I dare not venture to intrude upon the leisure of your beauteous friend; I know not, that even your introduction, would make De Courcy's presence welcome to her."

"I understand you Sir," rejoined



the Countess, gravely, "report indeed, has lately spread a story, which, until this hour, I held to be erroneous; I pray you pardon my enquiries, had I known you did not seek the presence of Lady Mary, I had been the last to ask your company."

"Ah! stay, yet stay and hear me, I beseech you, you are deceived; let me conjure you, plead my cause—" to Mary, he would have said, but the Lady Richmond was already gone; she had beheld the Lady Agatha approaching, whose fascinating smile had the effect she wished, in confirming the Countess in her idea of the good understanding that subsisted between herself and the distressed De Courcy.

No longer able to conceal the acuteness of his feelings, he made a short, and much less courteous answer, than was his usual mode, to the fair Agatha, who, though her method of ad-

dressing him was such as to insinuate their mutual attachment, had, in reality merely brought him a message from the Queen, and, without waiting her departure, he left her, anxious to ascertain his doom from Mary's eyes, to approach her side, who was then listening, as she continued to play with constrained attention, to the invectives of the fair angry Countess of Richmond, on his imagined inconsistent conduct.

The game was at a most interesting crisis, and fortune seemed disposed to smile on the fair De la Pole, but the voice of De Courcy, in whose every accent anxiety and love were evident, could not be heard without emotion, and the Earl of Richmond, in whose favor the game was soon decided, rising from the board, with a gay smile, protested that his presumption, in attempting to engross the company of Lady Mary, deserved the punishment

he met with in her inattention, and left the hall, in company with his Countess, while Mary joined in an embarrassed conversation with De Courcy, and the Earl of Pembroke wished his arrival had been more remote.

It was a situation little to be envied, and from which the lady Agatha was so obliging as to set them free. Piqued at the manifest indifference, of Almerick, to charms which she had almost persuaded herself he held in adoration, possessed too much the spirit of retaliation not to resolve to be revenged on him, who, added to his other offences, had already sought Fitz-William, to assure him how sincerely she lamented having been the unintentional cause of his unhappiness. Lord Pembroke, half attentive to his friend, and listening to his rival, was sauntering near, with Ingilram Trevannion, who discovered not that his conversation

could have been very willingly dispensed with, and Mary, demanding of De Courcy if he had recently heard aught of the family of the Mowbray's; "the change in the Duke's sentiments," said she, "none can lament with more sincere regret than I have done, it is an ill example that he sets to younger men, who will, I greatly fear, be all too apt to follow one of his distinguished fortunes."

"Inconstancy," replied De Courcy, with a persuasive tone of more than usual softness, "is not, I trust, so prevalent; or if it is, it shall be my first boast to be in opposition,—may I not hope," he added, while her resistless hand rested within his own, "that Mary does believe so?"

The eyes of Mary did not indicate severity, and De Courcy yielded to the extatic influence of hope; yet transient, alas! was the pleasure, and doubly keen the arrows of disappoint-

ment, when, ere the maid had given utterance to the half formed sentence of forgiving love ; the page of the Lady Agatha approached, and told De Courcy that the dame he served, requested his attendance in the gallery.

“Commend me to the lady Agatha, good youth,” he answered, “but say that I must crave her pardon, if I disobey her summons, I cannot now attend her.”

“The lady, Sir, commanded me to say you was no stranger to her business with you, and interested, she hoped in the event, would not delay.”

“Say as I bade you,” he replied, with an unusual frown, for rarely did severity appear upon DeCourcy’s brow, “go ! The lady De Roussillon cannot possibly have any thing to communicate to me that may not wait ; retire, and say that I am engaged.”

“Nay, but I do entreat you go, Sir Almerick,” exclaimed the lady Mary,

rising with more than unusual dignity, "there is no reason that unnecessary ceremony should detain you here."

"Sir Almerick," repeated the amazed De Courcy, as he gazed on her in the attitude of astonishment, "Sir Almerick! mother of God, and is it come to this? can it be Mary De la Pole who speaks, and to De Courcy? Madam, it is meet you use your pleasure with your servant, nor do I mean to argue on your justice, and yet, by heaven, it is hard, what wonderful change? how well did my presaging heart foretell the sorrows that would be its lot, when first ambitions voice induced Lord Suffolk to take her from the calm retreats of Monmouth; Oh Mary, hear me! dispel that petrifying frown and hear me! explain the false imputed charge, that steels your soul against me!"

"The explanation is not necessary, Sir," she answered coldly, "nor have

I any wish, but to convince you ; you can oblige me only by your absence : the Lady Agatha awaits your coming ; let her not have to tax my breach of courtesy, in keeping you one moment longer from her ; my Lord of Pembroke, I attend you Sir, the dances, I believe, by this, must be commencing, and the Countess, no doubt, will chide our tardiness." With more than accustomed gaiety she gave her hand to the enchanted Earl, who, with an air of triumph, led her from the hall, while the eyes of the angry De Courcy gazed after her in agony, as she passed him with a slight inclination of the head, and pursued her way to the gallery, which echoed with the strains of mirth and minstrelsy, that beat in utter discord with De Courcy's throbbing breast ; the prospects of revenge alone possessed him. Certain it was that each concurring circumstance had but too strongly

tended to confirm the Lady Mary in his want of faith, nor knew he how to hope to undeceive her doubts, but these were all forgot in a painful recollection, well did he know that Pembroke long had loved, even to adoration, the accomplished Mary ; his personal attractions, even his eyes, could not refuse to approve, and his high birth was matched with equal fortune, and supported by the most powerful expectations. These were circumstances which, when De Courcy reflected on, and reflected that, while in the service of his Sovereign, he had been bravely encountering every danger. Pembroke had, in Powis Castle, been Mary's sole protector, made him tremble for the effects, that such an opportunity of forwarding his passion might have produced upon her mind, which common report had but too evidently prejudiced in his disfavor.

Passing along the apartment, where



he doubted not to behold them gaily treading the mazes of the dance together, for he might well have said :

“ Still to this place my heart inclines,  
Still hither turn my eyes :  
Hither my feet unbidden find their way!”

he was agreeably disappointed to find Mary seated near the Queen, in conference with some ladies of her train, but had Lord Pembroke been more distant, he had been better pleased ; he was leaning on the back of the high wicker chair she sat on, and at the moment of De Courcy's entrance, was endeavouring to seize a bracelet that had escaped her arm ; by accident, the ring she had sent him to the Red Castle, escaped from his bosom, where to avoid the painful necessity of resigning it, he had worn it, from the day she so earnestly entreated him to give it back. He hastily endeavoured to conceal it, but it had not escaped De

Courcy's eyes, who instantly recollected it to be that which he had once, in a happier hour, given to the Lady Mary, in whose face, the very evident traces of embarrassment, confirmed the distressing surmise, that she had sacrificed his hopes to the Earl, a look replete at once with love and unutterable anguish, was the only reproach he had to her ; but of Lord Pembroke he demanded sternly the restoration of the ring, which he, with equal pride, refused to resign ; their altercation reached, at length, the ear of Margaret, who demanded the occasion ; they were compelled to desist their argument, though not until it had been agreed to meet that night behind the Castle walls, to adjust their differences by the sword.

At midnight hour, when all was hushed in sleep, save Mary, whom inquietude kept from the downy pillow of repose, Pembroke followed his first

page by torch-light to the appointed spot, and in the outward court, behind the castle, found Almerick De Courcy waiting his arrival. Their former days of unreserved friendship, rushed forcibly over the memory of both, and for a moment their death fraught purpose was suspended, yet they were not abandoned, De Courcy had certainly sufficient cause for resentment, nor did Pembroke's heart refuse, in secret, to acknowledge their justness; but who, that loved like him, could have resolved to resign those pretensions, which, unhappily, he thought he had a right to form to the favor of the Lady Mary De la Pole.

Once, it was true, he had freely given his honor to abide by her choice, a resolution, he then believed he could adhere to without regret, for his heart could not long cherish love, if requited with indifference; unfortunately, the passion which that very circumstance

had nearly eradicated, was revived at Narbeth with redoubled ardour, and hope taught Pembroke to believe, that gratitude might yet be changed to love; Mary, it is true, had given no reason to support the deluding idea, but DeCourcy who was absent, was accused publicly of ceasing to regard his engagements, and the peculiarity of her situation, obliged her to be frequent in his company, which the applauses of an admiring world had taught him to believe, by no means disagreeable, and that a heart once disengaged would not for ever listen to his vows of endless love with perpetual indifference. It was under this error that he retracted his promised forbearance, and vowed, in secret, to resign the pursuit of Mary only with his life; what wonder then, if yielding to those sentiments, he should openly avow them to De Courcy, and rather prefer giving the satisfaction he demanded, than to resign the lady .

of his heart, yet did the fates decree, that the sword of Almerick; should not revenge his quarrel; already had each retired to his place, already did their half-unsheathed weapons gleam through the dusk of night, in the torch beam, when the brave Talbot struck his ponderous shield, and cried to arms, the castle is assaulted, and treachery abroad; to arms! to arms! the numerous vassals roused from their slumbers, hastily assembled from every quarter of the castle, while the wide courts re-echoed only with the din of warlike preparation, "my Lord of Pembroke," cried De Courcy, "be the decision of our quarrel stayed, but not forgotten: I need not say that now, a higher duty calls us."

"Be it at your pleasure, Sir," rejoined the Earl, "I need not say, that when De Courcy calls, Pembroke will not be found unwilling to attend him—what ho! Guards, follow me, your Queen

demands your service, look to the braw-bridge, and ring out the alarum bell, mine honor to an empire, we will give the bold intruders welcome, haste forward to the ramparts."

Margaret, whose bosom, seldom, even in the moment of the most threatening danger, became the sport of fear, and in the battle glowed with far more than her sexes resolution, no sooner heard that the attack was led by the Earl of Devonshire, than she resolved to abandon the castle, so highly did his wonderous fame in arms appal even her undaunted spirit, in vain did her noble brothers, Richmond and Pembroke point out the alarm that such a measure would occasion in her followers, and how greatly would their numbers be diminished by the loss of their assistance, who must of necessity go to guard her person, accustomed to give heed to no decisions but her own, she was deaf to their remonstrances,

and, by a private postern, opening to the forest, quitted the castle of St. Briaval, at the dead hour of midnight, escorted by a train of chosen followers, whose known attachment to the House of Lancaster, rendered them a host of more than thrice their numbers.

Not many miles to the southward of the castle, lay the Severn's banks, thither they bent their way, and passed the forest, happily without annoyance, though frequently within hearing of large detachments of the enemy's hosts, here they embarked on board a little bark, destined towards Stratford, whence it was the Queen's intention to bend her way to Northampton, in order, by her presence, to give fresh animation to the army then encamped there, under the command of the Royal Henry, who, though but little suited, either by inclination or abilities to such a weighty charge, had reluctantly consented to undertake it, at the urgent

and oft repeated entreaties of the Lords of his council, who believed that such a measure would induce thousands to flock to the standards of Lancaster, who had but little inclination to obey the Duke of Somerset. The incredible numbers who almost daily resorted to him, proved the idea to have been by no means erroneous ; but alas ! the augmentation of his army did but tend to encrease the difficulties of him, whose too mild discipline could not restrain the licentiousness of the soldiery ; for a time, indeed, they were successful, even to the astonishment of themselves, and in a degree that exceeded their most sanguine expectations, but the event manifested the error of those who had advised the measure, by the ill success which soon after overshadowed the flattering dawn of fortune.



## CHAPTER XXIV.



LONG ere the dawn of day, the vessel ploughed the rolling waves with fair and prosperous gales, while Margaret, who had rode the greater part of the way upon full speed, retired to her bed, as did also the Lady Agatha De Roussillon, and the fair Emma De Evereuxe. Mary, but little disposed to rest, seated herself upon the deck, and while she heard only the ditty of the ship boy, which mingled with the murmurs of the water, formed a soothing sound, enjoyed the tranquillity of the hour, in a double degree, by comparing it with that scene of warfare

and confusion which still was present to her imagination in every fearful form. Again, in her idea, she beheld the rugged forms of the besiegers, as they swarmed around the ramparts, and some more hardy daring to scale the walls, met instant fate from those who did but wait for their approach, to send their mangled bodies back to their venturous fellows: again she heard the braying of the brazen trumpet, followed by the insulting summons of the Earl of Devonshire, as his herald from without the walls called proudly on the garrison to yield; still did the death-fraught arrows wized, in fancy, through the echoing air, and still she heard the last sad groan of the expiring soldier. She thought too, of De Courcy, who should say, when death in every shape assailed the valiant hosts of Lancaster, that even, at that moment, he might not be fallen a victim to that fate, to which, perchance, her obduracy had

driven him. It was a painful reflection; the tears, glittered on her wan cheek, and Almerick, in that moment, stood absolved.

The first bright rays of Phœbus, already darted their enlivening beams upon the unruffled waters of the Severn, and formed a striking contrast to the lost repose her heart confessed: fatigue, at length, overcame her and she retired to her cabin, though not without full many an anxious sigh heaved towards the now far distant towers of Saint Briaval.

“Next night, a dreary night,” the impending storm howled loud and fearfully from the angry north: useless, alas! was rendered every effort of the mariners, for furious and incessant roared the merciless blast, while the lightning, darting with terrific blaze from the thinly gathered clouds that hung the Heavens with black, added new horrors to their situation, by af-

fording them a momentary view of a tremendous ridge of rocks, that frowned above the agitated deep, and seemed to threaten every moment to put a period to their existence.

In vain did the minute guns fire to give notice of their distress; none heard, or none had courage enough to venture "through the pitiless storm," to lend them aid. Several planks had started, and were discovered, by the incessant lightning, floating around the vessel, and the water in the hold increased so rapidly that every attempt to stop the leaks were fruitless: their loss was held to be inevitable; and, as the last, though desperate resource, her attendants besought the Queen to suffer them to put her and her Ladies into the boat, which, as they were sensible they could not be very far distant from the shore, it was hoped might live to reach it.

Long did she generously combat their united prayer, being reluctant to

leave any one of those, to whose attachment she was so much obliged; and it was almost by force that she was, at length, prevailed upon to quit the bark. Five of her attendants were all that could follow her ere the waves drove them from the vessel's side, while they were nobly contending which should share her fate, or encounter that which threatened them, rather than overthrow the boat, and hazard, by that means, the safety of their Sovereign.

For many an hour of perilous anxiety they drove before the blast; which, often varying, bore them, towards the morning, to the coast; but oft as they essayed to land upon the craggy beach, as often did the heavy surf, occasioned by the uncommon swell of the waters, force them to retire, till one loud dreadful crash destroyed at one hope, and the knowledge of their miseries; the boat was dashed with fury on the pro-

jecting rocks, and, in an instant, went to pieces, while oft and dismally the shrieks of the drowning mariners echoed from every side: Mary, in that eventful moment, felt herself clasped to the beating bosom of her Royal Mistress, and happily became insensible to all the horrors that surrounded them.

She found herself, upon reviving, within the lowly hut of a young fisherman, that dwelled beside the beach, to whom both Margaret and herself were indebted for their preservation; the former of whom appeared, however, to be in a state of much danger from the miseries to which she had been exposed so recently. Mary entreated her to endeavour to seek repose, in order to calm her agitated spirits, while herself sought their young host, to ask the fate of their ill-starred companions.

Little, indeed, could he inform her of that which did not tend to confirm her apprehensions. “ Rising in the

night," he said, "in order, if possible, to lend assistance to those who were in peril, he had found the storm too much for his little vessel to brave, and was compelled, with much regret, to forego his charitable purpose. Still lingering on the beach, unwilling to return, it was by the first faint dawn that he discovered the Queen, and his fair auditor, extended on the sand, where the rude waves had borne them, while the scattered fragments of a boat, which he imagined to have been upset in the tempest, lay in pieces on the craggy bases of the rocks; but, alas! there appeared no vestige of any other human being having escaped its rage."

If Mary's heart shrunk at the recital of those dangers she had so unexpectedly surmounted, how much was every sentiment of terror augmented by the tale the fisherman related, of those that, even at that hour, hung over her.

"Alas ! my friend," she cried, "how much do we owe to your humanity : teach me but how I may repay the services you have so freely bestowed."

"Sufficient, Lady, is the reward of having been instrumental in your preservation. Small, alas ! are the services within the power of Phillip to bestow, yet are they freely your's : let me then urge you to depart from hence, while happy chance may favor your escape : believe me, gentle dame, beneath this roof you do not rest in safety."

"You much astonish me," replied the maid ; "how can we doubt your friendship or benevolence ?"

"Your fair opinion of your servant, Lady, honors me sensibly ; but here I am not master ;" and he looked as if, till then, he had never felt so forcibly the want of fortune's favors, while he added, with a transcient blush of confusion, "the rank of your illustrious



companion has not passed undiscovered by those whom interest governs."

"Your frank avowal, youth," replied the Lady Mary, "merits alike my admiration and my confidence. The noble dame you rescued from the waves is her whom you believe her, Margaret, your Queen: but say from whom is treachery apprehended, and let your duty and compassion instruct us how to avoid its influence."

"I blush, Lady, to acknowledge that my uncle, whom this humble dwelling owns for master, feels not for the royal Henry the attachment which his eminent virtues may well command; to the Lord De la Mere, who, westward of the mountains, lies encamped not many miles from hence, spite of my earnest prayers to stay his purpose, did he hie this morning, with the right welcome news that Margaret, unattended and defenceless, lay beneath his

roof; for I could not deceive him in her quality: he had once seen, and but too perfectly remembered her. The tale, no doubt, will not pass unregarded; each hour do I look for his return, yet do I think my royal Lady may escape their hands could she but bear with the fatigues that must attend her flight, ere evening you might reach the town of Monmouth; there . . .”—  
“Of Monmouth, sayest thou?” demanded Mary, with energy: “Oh! tell me, youth, are we then near to Monmouth?”

“Not five miles distant, Lady, rise its stately walls; where, would her Majesty accept a homely residence, I have a mother that would hold her poor hut highly honored by her presence: there she awhile might rest free from suspicion or pursuit, and myself will, if it meets your pleasure, be your guide.”

Mary returned him such unfeigned

acknowledgments as his attachment to her royal Mistress merited, and left him to relate to Margaret this most unwelcome proof of interest York possessed within the hearts of many of her fickle subjects, who listened to the recital with indignation and impatience; and scarcely would she be prevailed on to confide in him, from whom they had already experienced such essential service, believing, or affecting to believe, he could not be expected to be untainted by his kinsman's principles of foul disloyalty, however he might teach his wily tongue a language that his heart disowned. With the proposal of their flight she seemed but little to accord, though she made no absolute denial, but told the Lady Mary, who felt in its full force the pain of bearing such an answer back (in return for services he might certainly have withheld, had he been so disposed), that no necessity, however urgent, should induce

her to encounter so great a hazard as to repair to the dwelling of his mother; a suggestion which she treated, at the same time, as purposing to betray and to degrade her.

Little time was suffered to elapse before they left the inhospitable dwelling, and, as Phillip led the horses through the most unfrequented paths, they were soon out of the probability of pursuit that might be made after them. "How far," asked Mary, "may we be distant, Phillip, from the Priory of Saint Mary?"

"As I should guess, Lady, but a few hours ride," he answered; "already, to the left, I see the towers of Monmouth." Mary blushed, and asked no more: she recollected the happy hours she had passed beneath their mouldering roofs with Almerick and the beauteous Gertrude, and sighed while she reflected on the changes that, since

those hours, had checquered her eventful life.

The weariness of the exhausted Margaret, joined to the agitation of her haughty mind, which felt, with the severest agony, the humility of being thus circumscribed by the aspiring House of York, rendered her utterly unable to proceed. She threw herself from her horse upon a rising bank, and declared her resolution there to abide the night, rather than attempt the painful task of proceeding, to which her strength and spirits were utterly inadequate. "Alas!" cried Mary, with a desponding sigh, "and is there then no friendly roof where we may find a shelter." Never till now had Margaret appeared to yield to the storms of fortune, as hope forsook her soul in her unshrinking fortitude, Mary's more timid mind took comfort; but that prop once fallen, she looked on all as lost. "Could her Grace but reach the Convent of

Saint Mary's, lady, the holy sisterhood would, doubtless, welcome her with ready zeal," replied the youth, whose eager eye, glancing with heedful observation round him, betrayed how much he apprehended a surprise, though reverence for the will of the Queen, compelled him not to urge their progress onwards.

"Alas! that is impossible," cried Mary. "The tower of Monmouth, Lady," rejoined the youth. "Say what of it?" asked the Queen, who, till that hour, had scarcely deigned to notice him who served her; "Are you well instructed in the nearest path, or think you we should meet with shelter there? Knowest thou to whom it belongs?"

"Alas! my royal Lady, no," he cried, with modest grace, for mild and pleasing were the manners of the stranger, and little suited to the garb he wore; which humble as it was, could not conceal an air of native ease, that

shone conspicuous ; nor less so did the warlike terms, in which, when questioned by the Lady Mary, touching the encampment of Lord De la Mere, he rendered his account ; while upon his open brow would beam the lofty spirit of a soldier. “ Its master wanders in a distant land, or is, perchance, ere this no more (for sorrow has sat heavy on his soul) ; but, would your Grace permit, I would conduct you thither, and procure refreshments and conveyance at the Priory, which is within the limits of three miles.”

“ We thank you for your ready zeal to serve us ; but say (for I remember not the circumstance), does no one of the family reside there ?”

“ None, may it please your Grace. The good De Courcy, banished through the means of the Earl of Suffolk . . .”

“ Ha ! peace,” exclaimed the Queen ; while Mary trembled at the storm of

mingled passion gathering on her brow.

“ I need not be reminded . . . No, I will remain even here, exposed to every ill that can assail me, rather than enter the abode of Monmouth. Thou spokest of Suffolk too,” and she seemed to shudder with the unwished remembrance of some past event; “ Name him no more. Mary, do not weep; yet, trust me, I am nought displeased to find the memory of the gentle Lord, your father, is still remembered, as it ever should be, with keen and endless sorrow.”

Phillip, who thought his absence would not be unwelcome, had betook himself to an adjacent eminence, in order to observe if any danger was likely to approach them; nor had he long been thus employed, when he returned, breathless with speed, to acquaint them that a troop of cavalry were winding their rapid march along the Severn, and, unless they instantly



betook themselves to flight, would overtake their steps.

Though so much exhausted as to be incapable of rising from her lowly couch without assistance, Margaret endeavoured, for a moment, to inspire the companion of her sorrowing hours with a degree of courage which had forsaken herself, and, once more betaking herself to horse, she suffered Phillip to conduct her, without opposition, towards Monmouth, now their only hope of refuge; while Mary followed, with a beating heart, through paths almost inaccessible to human footsteps.

They had just past the base of the stupendous mountain, down whose rugged side De Courcy led the beauteous Gertrude Mowbray, (when from her lips he first, with anguish, learned that Mary was the daughter of his house's foe), when the half fallen archway, which had, in former times, been the grand entrance to the tower of Mon-

mouth, first rose upon the sight in frowning dignity, through the thick descending mists of evening, which rendered the surrounding objects but half discernable, to which the wide extended branches of the dusky avenues of larch, and many an encroaching bramble, that reared its head within the spacious courts, added a dreary gloom. Phillip, when he had assisted Margaret to alight, past forwards with the horses, while she slowly followed, leaning upon the arm of Mary, who, forgetful that she was betraying her knowledge of the place, directed the young peasant as he went. Passing beneath the drop-gate of the barbican, who had raised her eyes to read the half effaced inscription that had once set forth the illustrious origin of the founder, cast them, with a sensation of superstitious terror, upon a female form, that flirted, at a distance, through the building, and was seen no more, though long her looks

were fixed upon the spot, expecting every moment to behold it again emerge. Mary observed it too, and recollected many a fearful tale, which, in the Priory, she had often heard; though, when she had frequently at eve trod those lorn paths with Gertrude and De Courcy, they were but lightly thought on; but, at that moment, even Phillip seemed impressed with secret awe, and acknowledged that the figure had not escaped his notice. Margaret protested she would go no further; nor had Mary sufficient courage to attempt changing her resolution. Uncertain on what future plan to fix, they lingered on the drawbridge, which was lowered by massy chains of iron over a spacious mote, designed, in other days, to serve, at the same time, for a defence and ornament to the building, but now choaked up with many a noxious weed: here, as they stood contemplating the vast extent of the once noble pile, the

sound of the bugle horn came echoing over the moor, foretelling but too plainly that the troop of cavalry they had marked some hours before pursued their route.

The necessity of the moment vanquished every former fear, and they precipitately retired into the recesses of the tower; but, imperfectly acquainted with the place, they met impediments at every step, till Mary, gathering courage from despair, consigned to Philip's care her Royal Mistress, and endeavoured to explore the way towards the hall, where once she sat with Gertrude.

It was there that Margaret, and Mary De la Pole, seated upon a gothic bench that had, in former days, been appropriated for the minstrels of the house of Monmouth, passed the hours in breathless expectation of the return of Philip, who had quitted them, after seeing them bestowed in tolerable safety,

as he hoped, to procure from the nearest dwelling such provisions as the rustic cottager could be expected to afford. The well remembered sound of Saint Mary's deep toned bell, ringing for nightly prayers, informed them it was near the hour of eight; and, in less than half another, they looked for the return of the faithful fisherman, whose respectful services had something diminished the suspicions of his want of faith in the mind of Margaret.

While thus they sat, a gleam of light shot through one of the high painted casements, shedding its feeble rays, which, as it moved, glided along the mouldering walls, and, by its long continuance, marked the wondrous extent of the hall: at the same time, too, they beheld a figure passing hastily along the western side of the building, and Mary entertained a momentary idea that it was Phillip, but soon it disap-

peared, and once more left the place involved in darkness.

“ The tower is not then, it should seem, wholly deserted,” said Margaret ; “ perhaps, when the youth returns, we may find better cheer.” Her companion answered only by a sigh, which plainly bespoke how very little she expected the hope to be realized ; fear and sorrow had subdued her soul, and she looked on every circumstance with the jaundiced eye of doubt and superstition. It was not many minutes ere the light again appeared, but in a still more remote part of the edifice: the form that bore it seemed, by the various parts where it occasionally appeared, to be ascending the spiral staircase of a watch-tower, and, by its hasty movements, to flee pursuit ; and the voices of several men that, at that moment, echoed in hollow murmurs through the courts, confirmed the dreadful idea that they were still pursued by

the horsemen, or had unfortunately made choice of a retreat possessed by some marauders.

While thus their whole attention hung on the event of that alarming hour, they distinctly beheld a man, apparently with caution, enter at one of the shattered casements near them, who, leaping lightly to the ground, he turned a lanthorn, which he carried in his hand, and seemed to explore the place, for a moment, with eagerness, when he approached the spot where, overcome with her extreme alarms, Mary lay extended, on the cold marble pavement, at her mistress's feet: but Margaret, who never more properly supported her own dignity than when she regarded herself as being encroached on, rose from her seat, and sternly asked his business, while in her hand she firmly grasped a dagger, that she ever carried in the foldings of her robe. She endeavoured, too, repeatedly to raise

the Lady Mary, and to inspire her with the same contempt of danger that, at that moment, animated her own dauntless bosom. The stranger sunk upon his knee before her: "Thanks to the Gods," he cried, "your Grace has then escaped your enemies." It was the welcome voice of the peasant Philip, who, on returning to the tower, first became sensible of the error he had committed in not endeavouring to raise the drawbridge, and quitting it by some less conspicuous pass, for the courts were filled by a number of horsemen, and, by the conversation of some of them, which he could imperfectly hear, he found they were not those he supposed, but followers of the Earl of Warwick, at that time the avowed and potent enemy of the House of Lancaster. To enter seemed to rush on certain ruin; yet, to know his Queen, and the Lady Mary, were exposed to such imminent dangers, without attempting to



afford them such protection as his arm could give, was not to be endured. He formed the adventurous design of passing through the midst of the cavaliers, and, by answering with cautious heed, to all such questions as were asked, he had nearly escaped suspicion. Failing, however, in his reply to one of the soldiers, the alarm was instantly given that treachery was near. In this predicament Phillip endeavoured to gain the colonade, from which he was certain of being at no great distance. Fortunately he succeeded in the attempt; but his pursuers followed him so quickly as to compel him to rush for shelter through the door of an apartment, which stood half unclosed; a figure hastily, as he entered, darted by him; and the cavaliers, mistaking it for himself, pursued it through the mazy windings of the edifice: Phillip seized that fortunate moment to effect his escape to the hall. As he had discovered that an idea of

seizing Margaret (of whose route they had been, by some accident, informed) had led them to coast along that part of the country, it was judged absolutely expedient to seek for some more retired part of the building, where they might hope to be in less danger of annoyance. The intention was not, however, practicable, for hardly had they proceeded twenty steps along the hall when they heard the echoing of footsteps along the adjoining terrace. Soon after two men, apparently in armour, entered the lower side of the hall, when one of them, striking his foot against a fragment of fallen stone, that impeded his progress fell, "by holy Paul," he uttered as he rose again, "you may pursue this amusing expedition Arthur, if it pleases you, but by my soul if I can again find the entrance, (and I believe it would be easier to find the way to Mecca) I will not wait for morning's dawn to guide me from places of such

enchantment ; ha ! what have we here ? as it should seem, some part of female attire," replied his companion, it feels like a veil, if so, the fair form that we followed to so little purpose, was no ghost after all."

" Truth my good friend, I cannot change my thoughts so easily," replied the first who had spoken, " from what I have heard relating to this solitary mansion, no human being has, for many a revolving year been its inhabitant ; hark ! did you not hear a sigh ? again,—it must be so, it cannot be illusion."

" Let us retire," cried Arthur, " I will fight when Warwick gives the word, but here, I think we have no business ; we entered, did we not, somewhere near where the moon light falls upon yon massy pillar,—ha ! by my soul, yonder the light again gleams from the turret ; it vanishes again, some

evil spirit surely does inhabit here :  
I'll hence to-night."

" I have been told many an eventful tale, concerning this once noble edifice," exclaimed his fellow soldier, " but never, until this night, did I give credit to them ; look at the topmost lattice of that wing, the figure seems to rest."

" So may it do until we are hence, for me," replied his comrade, " by the mass, I follow it no further ; they say the Lady Monmouth died by poison, who knows but still her spirit loves to linger about the once fair mansion of her injured Lord."

" God grant she rest in peace, friend, is my prayer, great were her sins, as I have often heard, and heavy her atonement ; the ruin of her Lord, whom all men loved, was the base work of the accursed Suffolk, here, lend me your hand, we may yet, perchance, go hence with safety."

These words were as the dagger's deadly point to Mary, and the agitated Margaret, in whose perturbed soul full many a long forgotten scene was painfully revived ; the swords of the cavaliers, as they glittered in the pallid moon beams, marked the way they took.

Nor did their supposition that the tower was frequented by supernatural forms, meet with discredit from the sorrowing Mary, who shuddered as she recollected her father's deeds, and breathed a secret prayer that they might find forgiveness. Philip, from a distance, observed the progress of the strangers, and before long beheld, with the utmost satisfaction, the whole troop depart from the tower, vowing no more to enter within its walls.

It was then the still and awful hour of midnight, a universal silence, at which the heart involuntarily shuddered, reigned throughout the desolated

fabric, and even the falling of the leaves were heard as wafted by the rising gale, they rustled over the unfrequented paths of the now deserted gardens, so powerfully did the melancholy of the hour operate on Mary's heart, that, almost forgetful they were enemies, she listened to the distant sound of the horses, as they trampled loudly over the rattling drawbridge, and felt, as the sound died gradually away, as if shut out from every social bond of intercourse with the human race.

When it was imagined that those disturbers of their peace, were at too great a distance to occasion any further alarm, the wearied wanderers ventured to survey their truly desolate abode, but small indeed, was the consolation to be drawn from thence; scarce could the light's faint ray reach the high vaulted roof of the extensive hall, round which, on many a massy pillar of grey marble, whose towering heads sup-

ported a gallery with a rich balustrade of gilded lattice work, were hung innumerable trophies and warlike accoutrements, the glorious spoils of valour; several of the doors were fallen from their hinges, and through them as far as the half fearful eye dared penetrate, they beheld many noble apartments evidently long since deserted, and no less visited by the ravages of time, for all alike wore the semblance of ruin; vainly did they seek for some place where they might pass the night with less inconvenience than in that they had first entered, for even the heart of Margaret felt appalled, at the idea of continuing where every hour they were exposed to peril and interruption,

A noble staircase of marble, which led from the lower end of the hall, was terminated in the center, at the top, by a large massy pair of folding

doors, and as they stood half open discovered an extensive corridor, into which opened many of the state chambers of the mansion. Phillip, whose zeal was indefatigable, led the way to one which seemed to promise more comfortable accomodation: the furniture here, which well bespoke the rank and high magnificence of its owners, appeared not to have suffered so much from time and the inclemency of the weather, as many other parts. The casements, though many of them imperfect, were closed; and on the whole far more than corresponded with their most sanguine hopes: a large carved table of knotted oak, occupied the centre of the apartment, round which were ranged low gothic benches of the same; at the upper end was placed a lofty dais of crimson velvet, richly wrought with gold, an ascent of seven steps; at the corners of which were placed the heads of



lions curiously wrought, led to the chair of state, above which, in a mantle of Minever, were suspended an escutcheon of the De Courcy's arms, with the sword and buckler of Gowen the illustrious founder of the family.

'Twas here that Phillip kindled the cheerful blaze upon the long-deserted hearth, and retired to secure the horses, and if possible the entrance to the hall below. They had not long enjoyed the blessing of tranquillity, when a violent stream of air, that struck its chilling dampness almost to her heart, induced the Lady Mary to forsake her seat, in order to discover from whence it proceeded; and venturing to pass behind the deïs, she beheld a faint light gleaming through an apperture in the arras, she started at a sight so unexpected, for it convinced her, but too strongly,

there where others, and perchance enemies, within the tower, or that some circumstance of fearful import would attend their stay. "What thus alarms you, Lady Mary?" asked Margaret, as she raised her eyes, to the pallid countenance of her companion, "sure we have passed such hours of late, as should have taught you a contempt for dangers."

"Ah! pardon me, my Queen," replied the maid, "say rather, it has utterly overthrown the little courage that I once possessed."

"Nay; but on what do you still gaze with such apparent fear? trust me, in time you will teach me to be a coward also." Mary, motioning to her to speak lower, pointed towards the place from whence the light proceeded, and at that moment heard the sound of footsteps near, that seemed to tread with caution: for an instant even Margaret paused, but,

as if arming herself with desperate resolution, rose from the table, and gathering her flowing mantle round her, took the dim lamp and declared her determination, rather to explore the cause, than pass the night in doubt and inquietude. Vain was every argument that Mary urged to dissuade her from the adventurous undertaking so fraught with danger to her person ; unheeding of them she approached the place, and drawing back the half-decayed arras, beheld a door of fretted brass, that gave her entrance to the chapel of the mansion, around whose walls were placed the monuments of a long line of noble ancestry, now mouldering into dust. Long it was since any use had been made of it, yet each distinctly heard a hasty step pass through the long drawn aisles, and, at the same time, the light receded from them ; Margaret paused irresolute, she seemed to fear lest her

unhallowed steps were trespassing upon forbidden ground, she cast her eyes around her, all was one wide continued scene of melancholy and gloom, the long deserted stalls of the knights were covered with dust, and fragments of stone cornices, which, in their fall, had beaten to the ground many a ponderous piece of armour, and the high hung banners rustled above their heads, as the faint current of air agitated them to and fro, while the long casements shook on every side, "we will retire," said Margaret irresolutely, as her hand rested on the massy door, and her whole attitude bespoke unusual awe, "but see the taper moves again! ha! save me, what was that? retire! retire!" something unseen rushed past, and struck her on the face with violence: at the moment that a female voice, whose accents were allured to woe, exclaimed, with a heavy sigh that seem-

ed to rend the heart that uttered it, Almighty Heaven, and is it then decreed, that even here I shall not rest in peace ; a door closed heavily, that echoed through the sainted dome, and the light was seen no more. “ Yes, by the Holy Virgin,” exclaimed the Queen, “ thy woes, sad wanderer, thy nightly wanderings shall henceforth for me be sacred ; never again shall Margaret dare with impious curiosity, to pry into the mysteries that are decreed by heaven to rest unknown. She closed the door, and drew the half-fainting Mary to a seat beside the hearth, where sad necessity alone had power to make them pass the weary night ; while Phillip, who soon after entered, slept with his unsheathed courtle-axe upon the footsteps of the deïs.

## CHAPTER XXV.



“ WE will depart from hence soon as to-morrow dawns,” said Margaret, anxious to afford some degree of hope to a bosom which it seemed totally to have bade adieu to ; but, alas ! Mary too visibly perceived the disappointment that must be the attendant of its indulgence ; and the grey sickly dawn of the morning, as it gleamed over the pallid countenance of her royal mistress, did but serve to confirm the idea, that a severe indisposition would prove the consequence of her fatigues.

Stretched on a lowly couch, with-

out one attendant, lay the once aspiring and haughty Margaret of Anjou; while Lady Mary, attended by the peasant, Philip, took once more the well-remembered way towards the Priory, that had been once the tranquil abode of her infant years, in order to prevail upon the Abbess to send some proper conveyance to bring the Queen to the sanctuary of their holy shrine.

How little did her heart, unpractised in the unsocial feelings of the interested, imagine that one who had devoted her days to the performance of charitable and religious duties, would hesitate for a moment what conduct to pursue; unconscious of the length of the way, she hastened onward; and as she entered beneath the low browed cloisters, her bosom swelled with pleasure and delight; as does the youthful warriors, who, after wandering many a tedious year,

in some far distant land, at length returns with rapture to the long deserted home, of his loved friends and kindred, from which he fondly hopes to part no more.

The venerable portress, Sister Beatrice, the same who held that occupation when first she entered a little infant, beneath their holy gates, needed not twice to hear her well remembered name repeated, ere in her aged hand she led the beauteous pilgrim to the Abbess, from whom Mary flattered herself with a no less cordial welcome.

Alas! how different was the event; the Dame, who, from the dignity of her appointment, clothed herself more in pride than meek humility, received her with a cold and distant air; no placed smile of welcome graced her unbending brow, on which austerity was strongly marked; when Mary, raising her veil, discovered the well



remembered features of one, who had dared, in opposition to her will, to quit her holy house, for the mansion of a father; a crime then looked on with severity, but since her change of fortune, with unrelenting anger: she arose not from her chair, but with a voice of proud, yet assumed, condescension, told her she had permission to approach; and Mary, in that moment, felt how little could be hoped for, where she had fondly thought to meet unlimited assistance.

The fathers of Saint Mary's Convent were the votaries of private interest; the rapid decline of the fortunes of the House of Lancaster, failed not to point out to them, the fatal consequences that might attend their house, should York become possessor of the throne; and find they had lent their aid to the adverse party; and on the very morning that Mary sought the Convent, it

had been decided to refuse sanctuary to the royal Margaret, should she solicit it, within their walls; for of her shipwreck on their inhospitable coast they were not uninformed, and therefore looked on it as an event of the greatest probability.

“ And are you then, my daughter,” asked the ungentle Abbess, “ still so infatuated to the cause of Lancaster, as to involve yourself, and this our holy house in the displeasure of the Duke of York! The many and eventful ills that have befallen the fortunes of your family, since you so rashly left us, might, I should have thought, have made some alteration in your sentiments.”

“ My sentiments are not accustomed to change with every tide of fortunes’ favours, Lady; yours have, I find, been more accommodating,” replied the Lady Mary, whose eyes, but little used to the glance of sarcasm, fully

expressed how well she knew how to estimate the prudence of the Abbess, and the extent of friendship she had to expect, from one who, while prosperity surrounded her, had been so truly liberal in professions.

Although the disappointed Mary met with no tender sympathizing bosom to inspire her with a single wish to linger, even for a moment's space, within the Convent, yet many an anxious hour took its diurnal course e'er she again repassed its massy gates. The fathers, well aware that she was acquainted with Margaret's place of retreat, with very little ceremony informed her, that it was a duty which she owed to the church to make them acquainted with it, in order, as they said, that they might pay the reverence that was due to her, but in reality for very different motives; and such as Mary did not want for penetration to

discern and guard against, by refusing to comply with the demand; the consequence of which was that they had recourse to means they deemed infallible; namely, that her own liberty must be abridged, till she thought proper to avow what they desired to be informed of.

Musing and sad the gentle mourner heeded not the flight of time, and already did the shades of evening begin to spread along the wide expanded horizon: she sat retired against the side of the dimly painted casement; her cheek reclined upon her snowy arm, and her eyes bent upon the chequered floor, when a soft rustling amongst the cyprus branches, that surrounded it, awakened her attention, and as she raised her eyes, she saw a youthful maid, whose habit spoke her of some holy sisterhood, who motioned, with her hand, she must be cautious, put through the

bars a little billet, and hastily retired into the thickest part of the gardens : while Mary, interested by the singularity of her conduct, delayed not for a moment to peruse the contents, which were as follows :—“ Would you escape the most severe persecutions, leave your apartment by means of the lattice on the eastern side ; and meet me an hour hence beneath the palm tree, should you be irresolute the opportunity will return no more ; the Abbess is your foe : your quitting the Priory, when heiress to the wealth of De la Pole, made her become so ; nor is she of a temper to forgive,  
Farewell and fail not.”

Carefully did the maid deposit in her bosom this unhopèd for proof of friendship ; and much she ruminated in her mind, to whose kind hand she owed it, till the clock gave the welcome signal for her to depart ; and

joyfully did she obey its summons, through almost deprived of power to do so, by the apprehension of detection; the well remembered spot was not far distant, where oft times when a child, she played; and faithful to the minute, the fair nun waited her arrival there, with a smile of undissembled pleasure. "Ah! tell me," exclaimed Mary, taking her extended hand, "to what benevolent stranger am I indebted for such wonderful kindness?"

"Can Catharine be a stranger in the wall of Saint Marys," replied the Nun, "who was at Walsingham, honoured with the title of your friend."

"Ah! pardon, my gentle sister," she cried, "my momentary forgetfulness, how very little could I hope, I had such a friend so near me; but say, whence is it that you are at Monmouth?"

“ Of that I will inform you, as we walk ; we have no time to lose : but first, your follower, the young peasant, is safe departed hence ; you start, but there is no cause for fear ; he has discovered nothing, though no means were left untried to tempt his honesty ; and I have happily found the means to send him from the Priory before their threats had forced him to betray the Queen’s abode ; which, trust me, you will henceforth have much cause to keep concealed ; the friends of York are but too powerful here, and much I fear the sanctuary’s self would lack regard ; soft turn we to the left—I hear the sound of footsteps near at hand.”

“ Ah ! gentle Catharine, will not this friendship, shewn to me,” said Mary, with a look of gratitude, “ draw on yourself the stern resentment of the superiors ?”

“ I fear not that they will discover

it," she answered, "or if they should the Abbess claims no power over me; some circumstances relative to our house have brought me hither, and will perchance detain me yet some days; those once adjusted, I return to Walsingham; where, if our sovereign would condescend, she might, I am sure, have honorable welcome and protections"

A little wicket, of which Catharine had found the means to obtain the key, soon brought them, by an unfrequented pathway, to the chamber of the portress, who had previously promised the gentle nun, to aid in the necessary flight of Lady Mary; already they had passed the cloisters: and Beatrice was on the point of releasing the fair captive, when, looking through the grate, they beheld Father Saint Nicolas, in earnest conversation with a man of noble mien, who leaning on his glittering sword, without



the gates, seemed to make a warm solicitation for some much desired boon. "I tell thee son," replied the priest, "I cannot grant thy suite; the maid thou seekest for does not rest within our walls, or if she did, trust me, to you I think, we should not yield her."

"Your ill opinion father, injures me, and does your charity but little credit; yet let me obtain some parly with the lady, for well I know (your pardon for the freedom of my speech if it offends) she is within the convent. My business principally concerns our Queen, whose residence, if fame say true, is not far distant: can you inform me of it?"

"I cannot, son, and do entreat that you will take your leave; the hour of vespers calls me hence; farewell! and peace be with you." The friar, with little courtesy, retired into the convent, and the stranger, with a

lingering step, reluctantly pursued his way.

“ Know you the name of that young Knight,” asked Catharine, who had remained with Mary at a distance, while Beatrice listened to the conference between the stranger and the father Saint Nicholas, “ I fear me he designs the Queen no good.”

“ I fear so too,” replied the aged dame, “ for, as he left the gate, I heard him say that there were many brave and gallant gentlemen, who would not cease from their endeavors to discover her ; but may the Holy Virgin disappoint their purpose.”

“ Amen ! good Beatrice,” answered Catharine, crossing her bosom with unfeigned devotion, “ but say, which way must we attempt the escape of this fair maid, for should she meet these rovers, the event might be most unfortunate for the noble Margaret.”

Beatrice, after in vain exhausting

her rhetorick to prevail on Mary to continue with the holy sisterhood, conducted her to a private postern, which opened into the forest, where, commending her to the protection of the saints, she bade her farewell, and, with the holy sister Catharine, repaired to the chapel, in order, by their appearance at vespers, to prevent suspicion, when the flight of the fair fugitive should be discovered by the Lady Abbess.

Scarcely had Mary turned the last projecting buttress of the convent's walls, before she beheld a youthful cavalier, who, with folded arms walked slowly onward at a little distance, and who, by his murray coloured hat and plumes of white, she knew to be the cavalier, of whose figure she had an imperfect view from the grate, while he conversed with father St. Nicholas; his face she had not seen, yet in his air, and the man-

ner his of gait, there was something that struck her as being one she had seen before, but the evening already was too far advanced to render objects any longer perfectly distinct, and before he had observed her, she struck into the deep recesses of the embowering forest, and wrapping her flowing veil more closely round her, pursued her lonely way uninterrupted; though often, as she passed along, her eye, through the interwoven branches, could mark the course of a gay troop of gallant cavaliers, who, as she judged by their appearance, and sentences that sometimes reached her ear, belonged to the youthful Knight she had shunned so cautiously. As they pursued the road leading directly from the Priory, she heard the name of Margaret joined to most earnest vows to discover her retreat, yet though each moment trembling with fear of being found so near, she was com-

pelled to follow the route they led, for she had no means to find her way through the untrodden parts of the forest, than by the assistance of the torches which their pages bore aloft, whose glaring blaze, darting occasionally through the gloom, assisted the affrighted wanderer, for dark and dreary was the night, when she with wearied yet with joyful steps, repassed the drawbridge of the tower of Monmouth, and crossing the barbican entered the inner courts: the pleasure that her return, (even though she brought no welcome tidings) would afford to her noble mistress, had made her hitherto think but lightly of danger, but she recollected the figure, which, on the evening before, they had seen flit through the collonade, as they entered the gateway, and she paused involuntarily, fearful of encountering it alone, "who passes there," demanded a voice from within.

She answered not: "is it the Lady Mary?" asked the same unseen person.

"Ah Philip, or do I mistake," she answered, "is it not?"

"Your servant, ever, lady," said the peasant, advancing from a door way near her, where he had stood concealed.

"How fares our royal mistress?" asked the gentle dame.

"Would I could answer—well," he cried, "yet her high spirit lets her not complain; much she regrets your absence, and I had stolen forth in order to watch round the walls, in hopes some happy chance might yet conduct you hither."

"Accept my thanks, and let us hasten to the council chamber,—this is the way, I think."

"Would you but be prevailed on, Lady, to pass through the chapel, you

should, I think, find it more agreeable," replied the peasant.

"Why think you so, good youth?" asked Mary, who then remarked the extreme agitation of his voice and manner.

"Have you forgotten then, Lady," he answered, "the form which but last night misled the Lord of Warwick's followers beneath these frowning arches?"

"Ah no, I have not: but say, good Philip, has it again appeared?"

"Twice, since the setting of the radiant sun, while here I waited until the shades of darkness might favor my approach towards the Priory, it has, at distance, crossed my sight, and may, perchance, affright your gentle nature."

Doubt and alarm arose within the bosom of Mary; yet how could she suspect the youthful peasant of harbouring designs against their safety; it

was at once to reward his zealous services with ingratitude ; but still it was strange for what purpose should he urge her to venture through a place which he never had himself explored. While thus she paused, irresolute for a moment, the mingled sound of many voices echoed along the avenues : the youth that instant seized her unresisting hand, and, while in the other he brandished his broad courtle-axe, conducted her across a noble corridor, at the further end of which a flight of marble steps led them to a magnificent and spacious gallery, through which, with many impediments, from the very deranged state of the once fair furniture, they at length entered, by a small pointed door of gothic construction, into the chantry of the chapel, where she, the night before, had been with the Queen.

“ Now we are safe,” exclaimed the youth, as he made fast the door



through which they had entered, and consigned the shining weapon to its scabbard ; “ your pardon, Lady, but the necessity of the moment admitted not of ceremony.”

“ Waste them not now youth,” she replied, “ but lead towards the Queen ; if, as it seems, you are instructed in the way.”

“ Along that aisle, where the broad moon beam rests on yonder monument, conducts us towards the council chamber.—Ha !—soft, what gentle maid comes hither ? By my soul it is the same fair form that fled before the cavaliers.—Nay, fear not Lady Mary, lean upon my arm, I will speak to it. Ha ! she sees and flies : mother of God, forgive our sins, it is a spirit : Lady do not faint.” With difficulty did he raise his fair companion, who, overcame with terror, had sunk beside him, and appeared almost stiffening in stone : encircled in his arms he bore

her towards the door adjoining to the council chamber, to which the chearful blaze upon the hearth, that glimmered through the apertures, directed him.

Her pallid form strongly excited the concern of her anxious mistress, to whom, when sufficiently recovered, she spoke of her fainting, merely as the consequence of fatigue, and wholly suppressed the story of her adventure in the chapel, nor did her guarded tongue speak of the voices she had heard in the collonade, for well she knew that Margaret, though she knew not how to fear in the fields of war, yielded, in common with the prejudices of the times, most implicit faith in supernatural agency, nor was her terror inferior to that she herself experienced, whenever the fair spectre obtruded on her too retentive memory.

Fortunately, however, the Queen was too much interested in her recital

of the inhospitable treatment she had met with from the Abbess of St. Mary, to ask the cause that brought her through the chapel; but Mary heeded much the conduct of young Philip, whose unusual restlessness of soul was evident in every action; and his expression seemed to glow far more with the generous and ardent spirit of a soldier, than with the humility of a peasant's humble life, while he spoke with indignant resentment of the revenge he hoped one day to take upon the haughty brethren of Saint Mary's Priory.

Far different were the sentiments this change of manners caused in Margaret, who hitherto had barely deigned to notice the low born follower of her ill-starred fortunes; she turned on him the glance of approbation, applauded his high spirit, and promised to advance him to some post of honor near her person, as soon as the re-adjustment

of her circumstances should restore her once again to her illustrious station.

But Mary De la Pole felt in her breast suspicion and surmises, as little to his credit as her repose. The conduct of this young stranger seemed to intimate some mystery that shunned investigation, nor could she fail to observe the crimson blush that dyed his cheek, when Margaret asked the story of his birth; yet while with the most studious heed he evaded explanation, he seemed to struggle with contending pride.

The distant bell, chiming the hour of four, rolled heavily through the vacant halls, and Margaret's wearied lids had yielded to the influence of sleep, when a soft strain of heavenly harmony broke on the stillness of the night, and, for a moment, hushed even Mary's palpitating heart to rest; it was a hymn to the Holy Virgin, and sung with a degree of tenderness and melancholy

that plainly spoke the soul of her that uttered it was a prey to hopeless sorrow. Mary, at every line, listened with redoubled emotion: often beneath the convent's sainted roof her tongue, with undissembled piety, had joined the well remembered lay, amidst the guileless companions of her infant hours, nor could she think she listened to the voice of a stranger. "Surely," said she, "they are the gentle accents of the fair Ellen De Courcy: hapless maid! too much, I fear, thy lot was a severe one; but oh! may Heaven forbid thy sainted spirit should wander midst these lonely walls, a stranger to repose." The tear stood in her eye; she meekly looked toward the door of the chapel, but, as if fearful of beholding her she had named, drew close her veil, and uttered an Ave Marie for the peace of Ellen.

Not many minutes had elapsed, rendered more awful by the dead silence

that reigned through the extended chamber, before the same celestial sounds again stole over her ear, and every fear was hushed in soft attention. Alas! it was but like the flattering calm that ushers in the storm to the adventurous mariner, rendering his woes the heavier to endure. It was the strife of swords in the hall below, that placed in regular array, before the eyes of Mary, the ruthless bands of York, ready to seize the royal Margaret. A momentary pause ensued, loudly she called on Phillip, but he came not; again she called, but the sounds of contention drowned her voice. Margaret, awakened with her cries, started from her couch and asked the cause, while, gathering courage from alarm, she unclosed the folding doors at the bottom of the chamber, and, from the balustrades of the corridor, looked down into the hall, where she beheld Phillip brandishing, in his upraised arm, an

unsheathed dagger, while, as a torch, that lay burning on the pavement, flashed in his face, his eyes sparkled with indignant rage, and his firm port rather bespoke [the warrior of renown, than one of lowly birth; raising his eyes, he caught the form of Mary, and motioning with his hand for her to retire, the person with whom he was contending availed himself of the opportunity to seek security in flight. Phillip turned, and marked the course he took, and, with the swiftness of the towering falcon, when he pursues the quarry, darted like lightning on his flying foe, and, wrestling for superiority, receded from the hall, while Mary, with a trembling heart, retired to ponder on the singular scene she knew not how to comprehend.

It was not until some hours after day, that he re-appeared with some provisions, which he had, he said, been

to procure from a neighbouring village ; but spoke not concerning the adventure in the hall on the preceding night ; but replied briefly, upon being questioned, that some one, in the habit of a monk, had, at that late hour, entered the hall, from a small gallery hitherto unobserved, that led into the corridor, near that of the chamber they occupied, hovering near which he had observed ; but on his questioning him concerning his designs, he answered not, but strove to find shelter in the gallery, which he since had found was connected with the chapel, beyond the council chamber ; here, as he followed him, the stranger had found the means to repass him, and, rushing down the staircase, had gained the bottom, when he seized and stayed him ; on which, he drew a poignard from his garment, and seemed determined, rather than be discovered, to encounter death. After they quitted the hall, he said, the stranger had



found means to escape, for he appeared perfectly acquainted with every intricacy and outlet of the edifice: he had passed the night in watching; in hopes he might again discover him, but in vain,—he came no more. He expressed the most earnest desire that neither the Queen; or Lady Mary, should, for some days, pass the boundaries of the council chamber, but assigned no cause, and seized the earliest opportunity to retire.

Towards the close of evening, as Mary sat revolving in her mind the many strange events she had lately witnessed, she missed the bracelet from her arm, that bore the minature of her loved kinswoman Gertrude Mowbray, and, from her anxiety to recover it, searched, though in vain, through every part of the chamber; and, recollecting that she might possibly have lost it upon the stairs during the night, went hither, in order to look for it. On the

stone seat, that once had been erected for the minstrels of the castle, and on which, herself and Margaret had waited the return of Phillip, on the night of their arrival at the tower of Monmouth: on this seat was reclined the youthful peasant, gazing so earnestly on something in his hand, and which she judged, by the sparkling of jewels, to be her bracelet, that he perceived her not, until, as she turned to re-enter the chamber, and hoping to avoid his knowledge that she observed him, he raised his eyes, started in confusion from his seat, and, consigning to his bosom the glittering prize, retired in evident confusion.

The Queen, on the return of Lady Mary, told her, she had been listening during her absence, to a voice, whose soothing sounds brought so forcibly to her memory Ellen De Courcy, that she was almost tempted, for a moment, to believe that it could be no one but

herself who uttered them, “and had it not been,” said she, “for the remembrance of the awful scene we witnessed there, I think I should have ventured into the chapel, for thence it seemed to proceed. Once, too, I even thought I heard her footsteps, and oft a heavy sigh broke on my ear; your entrance, I believe, disturbed the invisible minstrel, for, at the echo of the doors, as they closed after you, the music ceased abruptly.” Mary related, in her turn, the hymn to which she had listened during the night, and even then believed she heard the steps of some one near; but words are wanting to describe her terror, when the heavy doors of the chapel creaked on their rusted hinges, and, from behind the Deïs, darted the fair fragile form of Ellen, and clasped the loved companion of her youth to her enraptured bosom.

It was her, who in secret, dwells beneath the once magnificent towers of

her ancestors, unknowing and unknown by any one, save only one young maid, who shared her fortunes, and often, favoured by the night, adventured forth to gain such provisions as the bounty of the neighbouring convents dispensed, without enquiry, at their gates, to those who sought their aid ; the habit of a mōnk disguised her, and eluded all suspicion, and the few peasants who had sometimes marked her, with fearful astonishment, hovering at twilight round the ruins, conjectured that she was deprived of reason, or, for some sin committed against the holy church, condemned for penance to that sad abode, where no foot ever ventured to pursue her ; for, amongst the poor unlettered villagers, it was believed that many a restless spirit were destined, for some dark deeds, yet unatoned for, to wander for a lengthed space of years on this unhallowed earth,

there made their sad and nightly expiation: carefully did the credulous maid remark the dismal tale told round the Christmas fire by her grandam, and shunned the path way leading to the tower; the village boys listened with fear and wonder, and ceased to waste the hour beneath its frowning walls: while Adama, made secure by their credulity, often left their solitary abode to gain the means of subsistence for her mistress.

The traces of afflictions heavy hand, were wrote so legibly on every beautiful feature, that Mary wept when Ellen's woe-fraught form engaged her eyes, to mark the rueful change that two short years had wrought. Wrapped in her mantle lay a young smiling boy, whose infantine graces she seemed to contemplate with unbounded love. Seating herself on half of Mary's seat, beside the earth, she gave him to the

arms of Adama, who, with her beautiful charge, retired to one of the steps beneath the canopy, and Ellen, with tearful eyes bent on the ground, began her tale of woe.

## CHAPTER XXV.



THE treachery of Ulrick of Lichtenstein, and the too credulous belief of Count John, filled the cup of sorrow for the Lady Ellen. Early on the same evening that she fled, in the habit of a page, from the mansion of the former, her whole soul was a prey to jealousy and indignation, and scorning to owe to necessity, the hand that she was conscious of deserving, she yielded to their dictates, and dispatched a billet to her Lord, renouncing him for ever. By some ill-fated means, it reached not him, but the Lord Ulrick, who, hoping by extremities, to wile the beauteous

fugitive to his arms, he wrote, in the Count's name, the most insulting answer, openly taxing her with having forfeited, at once, his honor and her own, and threatening even her life if ever again her hated name obtruded its unwelcome sound upon his ear.

Few hours had elapsed before the vassals of the Baron Lichtenstein, hovered round the lowly dwelling that afforded shelter to the wretched Countess; they came, empowered by his commands, to force her back to his palace; but the threatening note of her husband, of which each fatal line was deeply printed on her tortured memory, joined to the hatred of the insidious Ulrick, added new courage to her drooping heart. Endebted for her safety to an humble maid, she fled, attended only by the youthful Adama, and, favored by fortune, happily gained the coast, and, in a few days, landed on the shores of England. Alas! how



changed her views of endless happiness since she forsook her friends and native land, and thought herself over paid for all in John of Luxembonrg, who now renounced her, for “kind permission, gracious leave, to sit on his own throne with tyrant William’s daughter.”

Pride, and the dread of encountering the angry eye of her justly offended brother, forbade her to seek protection in the train of Margaret of Anjou. Her aunt, the Duchess of Norfolk, was, alas! no more, and the Duke dwelled upon the tented field. Where then could Ellen shelter her woe fraught head so happily as in a convent’s gloom ; it was the place that seemed pointed out by the hand of Heaven, to restore peace to her wounded spirit, and shield her fame from envy’s cruel pity.

Clad in an humble pilgrim’s homely garb, the gentle Countess took her weary way towards the holy gates of Saint Mary’s Priory ; nor even then

did the faithful Adama refuse to be the partner of her lot. With looks of undissembled native innocence she told her sorrowing tale, but the ancient Abbess, Dame Elizabeth, devoted to the rigid rules of a monastic life, forgot that virtue's self, unattended by her handmaid, charity, is little more than name shrunk, with pious zeal, from the unoffending Ellen, and, after saying in the most mortifying terms of feigned compassion, that John of Luxembourg was now the wedded Lord of the Count Conrad's sister, the Lady Hermanfride, hinted that her continuance at the Priory must be short, lest it should cast a blemish on the sisterhood.

The native dignity of the De Courcy's did not so faintly dawn in Ellen's breast, as to brook with tame submission the imputation of dishonor, or sue to her, whose tongue had dared presume to accuse her, even obliquely, of disgracing her noble race; with a mind torn with

added anguish, though her tongue uttered not the accents of complaint, she quitted their inhospitable roof, and, in the ruined mansion of her exiled father, sought for that oblivion from the world, which could alone secure her from its insults. There the contested fatal title of Countess of Luxembourg was spoken of no more ; but the patient Ellen wept away the slowly passing hours, until one bright cheering ray gleamed on her gloomy fortunes, when first, in happy hour, the infant heir of the Count John smiled in his mother's face, unconscious of her miseries.

Twice had the hoary hand of winter swept with icy hand the lofty woods of Monmonth's wide domain, since Ellen left the stately residence of Lichtenstein, to shroud her beauties in the unfrequented waste, nor in that time had any intruding footstep disturbed her peaceable possession of the ruined pile, until, as she walked to enjoy the even-

ing breeze within the courts, as was her frequent custom, the followers of Warwick surprised the lovely mourner. What wonder if she, who had such perilous cause for fear, should shun the face of man, and dread to meet, in every one, the minister of the Lord John's revenge. Her eager flight, evincing the desire of concealment, awakened curiosity and keen pursuit: her superior knowledge of the building assisted her escape, but the soothing idea of security was no more, for the noises within the tower painfully convinced her there were other inhabitants beside herself and Adama, whom fear into erruption prevented from making her usual progress to the convent.

“Last night,” continued Ellen, “notwithstanding all our care, our little stock of provisions was exhausted, and Adama resolved to encounter every danger, and adventure forth; since the evening on which I was alarmed by

the Earl of Warwick's cavaliers, I had never dared to enter the colonade, until last night, when the first object that met my sight was a young peasant, who was apparently upon some discovery, that he much awakened my fears, though, truth to say, he seemed as anxious to shun observation as myself.

“It was, however, impossible to think of suffering Adama to expose herself to the danger of passing that way, and I returned to consult with her upon some means of security: she beckoned me with caution to approach the casement, whose very considerable elevation, rendered it but little probable we should be observed by those without, when we perceived a man, who stood at distance, as if contemplating with admiration the stupendous height of the stately edifice, motioning to his companions to take notice of our shadows, which were, no doubt, faintly

one of the innumerable bats, who made their undisturbed residence, for many a rolling year, within the fretted roof, and being attracted by her light, had flown towards it.

“Here as we sat,” said Ellen, whom Margaret requested to pursue her tale, each in her own sad breast revolving many an anxious thought that neither of them dared to give utterance, the light of torches flashed through the high, emblazoned lattices, and shewed the numerous sepulchral shrines that held the honoured relics of my ancestors, with awful solemnity; softly we unclosed the weighty casement, and leaning over their heads in breathless fear, witnessed, unknown, the melancholy scenes that passed below. With slow and solemn steps, a train of virgins followed a sable bier, round to the spot where we had seen the graves made in the earlier part of the evening.

“The funeral dirge was chaunted

by the priests of St. Benedicts, and I heard the names of the once fair Agatha De Roussilon, and the amiable Lady Morley, pronounced, aloud, as the closing earth entombed their lifeless forms within her clay-cold bosom."

Margaret lamented much the ill-fated destiny of her attendants, and most sincerely mourned ; many more, who had all too probably met the same sad fate, nor did Mary refuse, even to her rival, the tribute of a pitying sigh ; while she praised, with pious fervor, the power that had preserved her from the pelting of the pityless storm. Here Philip entered, he gazed with momentary wonder on the strangers, and rejoiced to find that the Queen and Lady Mary enjoyed, in some degree, the blessings of society ; he seemed particularly interested in finding that it was Adama who had, the night before, appeared upon the staircase, for he had

imagined it to be some one who came with ill intention towards the Queen, and more than once, in his own thoughts, had accused the brethren of St. Mary's Priory of having discovered her abode, and said that, in his endeavours to examine the edifice, in order to place the ladies in all possible security, he had been well convinced that somebody inhabited a part of it, that he had deemed their safety very doubtful, and having, in the evening beheld the bier placed in a small apartment near the hall, he had determined to spare the Lady Mary the knowledge of a circumstance so painful, by inducing her to enter through the chapel.

With such a modest ingenuity did he relate the tale, that Mary began to blame herself for having doubted him, but the bracelet returned to her memory, "yet it is impossible," said she, as he retired, "his manners



do not bespeak a mind that could be tempted by wealth."

"Know you that youth?" asked Ellen, as he retired.

"But as a generous stranger, to whom I am very much indebted," replied her gentle friend.

"Somewhere, though my memory serves me not with perfect recollection," answered the Countess, "I have seen him formerly, his features are familiar to my eyes."

"I should think not Ellen: he is, if he says truth, of lowly birth, though sure his looks, most evidently avoided to encounter your's."

"I may, perchance," said Ellen, "mistake him for some other; and yet I think, that we have met before." Mary looked as if she wished to have heard more, that her suspicions might be either banished or confirmed, for in their situation, should he be faithless, they had every thing to fear; and

Margaret requested the fair Ellen to renew her story, which his entrance had given interruption to.

“I have,” replied the dame, “but little more to add, more than the happy chance that brought me to your grace : until this eventful night, I had, from custom, ceased to think with pain on the wild solitude of my abode, but the alarms I had recently experienced, awakened every sad and terrifying thought, and I once sighed for the loved society of my long lost friends ; before I left the chapel, as I passed the towering monument of my ill-fated and noble kinswoman—Jane of Beauford, I discovered, through an aperture in the wall, near it, the imperfect glimpse of a female form ; the idea was happiness as great as it was unexpected. I communicated the circumstance to Adama, the ever uncomplaining companion of all my sufferings, and she mingled tears of joy and gratitude to Heaven. As we

talked together of the many tedious days that had slowly took their melancholy round, since first this dreary waste became our home ; soon as the evening spread its wished-for shade, again we took our station behind the monument, to watch, if happily, your light should again re-appear. Ah ! need I say the joy that Ellen's bosom feels once more, blessed in the society of her ever honoured sovereign and beloved sister." At the last epithet, Mary turned her head aside to conceal a starting tear, and painfully convinced the gentle Countess her heart had not been made the only seat of sorrow.

It was with little difficulty that Margaret suffered herself to be prevailed upon to remove to those apartments, which since they had become the residence of the Countess, boasted some greater degree of comfort, and it was, at least superior to the one she occupied, and thither they retired to pass

the night. As Mary followed with the little Manfred in her arms, she beheld something glitter, like jewels, in one of the deep stone-recesses of the window seats, and approaching, found it to be the bracelet she had lost from her arm the night before, “then I have injured Philip,” she exclaimed, as she took it up, “and he is, thanks to Heaven, as honest as he seems.” The words were scarcely uttered, when she discovered him at a distance, gliding with cautious pace along the hall, and in his hand he held a dagger, and in a moment, starting as if appalled at finding that she observed him, disappeared amongst the pillars at the western side, leaving, unclosed, a door which, from the war-like implements she saw arranged within, she judged to have been the grand armoury. “Still does some mystery,” she exclaimed, “adhere to this young stranger; ha! the miniature is gone! Astonishing,—these gems

indeed, might prove an object of temptation ; but the miniature of Gertrude's face can, to a peasant's eyes, have little charms,"

Ellen, impatient at her delay, returned to the portal, " why, Mary, do you linger ? you will miss the way."

" I waited but for the return of Philip, he knows not," she replied, " of our change of residence, and we may lack his services."

" Adama," said Ellen, " shall return and wait for him ; the Queen, I fear, will deem us deficient in the attentions that we owe her."

The usual hour at which Philip spread their frugal supper, had elapsed, and he had not appeared ; another hour passed, but still he came not. The Countess was anxious that her attendant should seek him in the hall ; but Lady Mary as strenuously opposed it, yet though her fearful glance spoke

forcibly, her tongue assigned no reason. "Surely Mary, said the Queen, "it is impossible that you, who are now convinced that all our former alarms were groundless, can again resign yourself to fear."

"Oh! let your Grace excuse my weakness, if I acknowledge I never felt myself more strongly influenced by that painful sentiment."

"Well, I will go myself with Adama," said the Countess, we will soon return."

"Oh! do not go, I do entreat,—you know not to what dangers you expose yourself and us."

"Nay, Mary, but you know the youth should not be left in ignorance."

"His ignorance may chance to prove our best security—I pray you do not go."

"What mean you, Lady Mary?" asked the Queen, "do you suspect his faith?"

"I must confess I do; yet may I

do him injury by my thoughts ; but sure his disappearance bodes your Grace no good !”

The dawning satisfaction that had not many hours before adorned the brows of the fair groupe, fled like a fleeting shadow in an instant, and terror and alarm usurped its place. Every heart trembled at the most trivial sound, lest it should prove to be the steps of Philip, who was so lately looked on as a sure protection ; for the circumstance of the dagger seemed to augur some desperate intention, which was confirmed past doubt, when Adama, who as late as midnight’s hour, ventured softly into the council-chamber, to observe if all was as they had left it, returned with an account that every pass, that way, had been made secure on the outside, and that they were effectually his prisoners.

It was not, until the expiration of the second evening, during which time

he had never appeared, that the ladies were alarmed with the trampling of horses in the court, for they much feared lest the Earl of Warwick's followers had gathered some intelligence concerning the Queen, and were returned, in order more minutely to explore the building. Mary thought only of Philip, and believed, that from him alone they could have obtained the information ;—it was now that they returned thanks to heaven, that by a discovery of each other, they had removed to a part where they still hoped they might rest undiscovered, but the footsteps of men, in the adjoining gallery, soon convinced them that it was a delusive hope. Reduced to the last sad extremity, they returned into an inner chamber, from whence there was a means of communication with the western turret, carefully closing the massy doors between, they began to ascend the winding staircase, which



branching off into the body of the edifice, led on the right hand at the top, to a long suite of apartments, one of which had formerly been made use of as a watch-tower, in time of danger or attack. Around the battlements were placed the destructive implements of war, and in the loop-holes still remained the engines from whence those within shot their square headed arrows, on the hosts of their besiegers. Margaret surveyed this ancient scene of warfare with martial energy, nor seemed to remember that she was no longer at the head of legions trained, by her example, to deeds of glorious war, but cooped within the deserted walls of Monmouth's tower, and circumscribed in power by a trifling band of traitors. From the contemplation of such a prospect, the gentler Ellen shrunk appalled, and clasping her infant closer to her bosom, hastened forward to the vaulted passage, where Mary gladly followed,

and at length prevailed on Margaret to do so too.

It was long and dark, and every heart, save that of the intrepid Margaret, shuddered with fear, even at the reverberation of their own voices, as they died in murmurs along the low arched roof, and were lost in the sighing of the winds, that blew keenly from the adjoining range of chambers. Adama, who carried the lamp, at length discovered a narrow flight of winding stairs, down which they followed her, and found themselves in a spacious gallery that entirely encircled the lofty dome of the council-chamber. Judge of their astonishment, when, leaning over the balustrade, they beheld, seated at the same table, they had so lately used themselves, a company of nearly twenty cavaliers ; around them, on the chequered pavement, lay their swords and helmets, decorated with the white rose, and the banners of York, richly

emblazoned, were hung upon the pillars near.

Others who were, like themselves, in military habits, were busily employed in preparing food, while the Knights seemed to hold conference with much emotion ; their features, (from the considerable height they were above them) the ladies could not distinguish, but from their accoutrements and figures, they appeared of rank. While thus they stood in silent contemplation of a prospect so truly unwelcome to them all, but particularly so to the Queen. Adama, too, unwarily lowering her lamp over the balustrade, some sparks fell on the table, each started from his seat with amazement, and before the maid could retreat, it was evident she was observed. Margaret, in anger, seized the light, and too preceitate in her resolves, extinguished it, without reflecting on the unavoidable necessity there was to quit the gallery on the

instant, or on the difficulty they should encounter, in retracing their way in utter darkness, for to continue there was wilfully to rush on certain ruin, to return was the only resource Heaven left within their power. Margaret herself led the way, and many a stern reflection did she cast on those whose timidity had induced them to seek their safety beyond the watch tower, where it was now her intention to retrace the devious way and wait the event, the night was dark and chill, and very faintly through the narrow loop holes, shone the pale beams of the dimly rising moon, her only guide following its imperfect ray, which often were shadowed by a passing cloud, she took a wrong direction, and after wandering through many a wide and desolate apartment, they found themselves in the chapel, and the sound of footsteps but too plainly told them they had ran on those they had designed to shun.

Margaret drew forth her dagger from her bosom, determined rather to die by her own hand than yield herself a prisoner to traitors. With trembling steps her timid companions followed where she led, and Mary as she passed the rude stone cross that marked the resting place of Dame Elizabeth, her honoured aunt, imagined that she could discern, beneath the grated window, the figure of a man, and in a moment felt herself detained; uttering a fearful shriek she disengaged herself, and the voice of him whom she could not distinguish, informed her it was Philip. At the extremity of the chapel she regained her friends, who, finding it impossible to expect the safety they had hoped for, retired again to the apartments of the young Countess, where Margaret determined to defend herself with desperate and unyielding resolution.

Scarcely had they entered, before

the voices of those who had annoyed them in the chapel, seemed every moment to approach more near, and each heart, but Margaret's, yielded to despair round whom the affrighted fair-ones clung, as if alone expecting safety from her presence.

## CHAPTER XXVI.



THUS were they situated, when a voice claimed admittance from without, and Margaret, with a dignity that scorned to fear, commanded that he should, whoever he was, have entrance ; when a young courteous knight, gallantly habited, stood before her, and paid the reverence her sex and rank demanded. He wore his vizor up, and in his manly features might be traced the resemblance of the peasant, Philip. “Ha ! look to de la Pole,” exclaimed the Queen, as she beheld the pallid hue of death spread over her brow :—it was an appellation often

used to distinguish the Lady Mary, but the stranger started at the sound. "And lives he then?" exclaimed a youth indignantly, whose unsheathed weapon gleamed at the entrance, which was thronged with warriors clad in arms. "Lord Falconbridge, we fight not in defence of the traitor, Suffolk; let us hence my friends."

It was at the moment that his companions paused, irresolute between their hatred to the Earl, whom they imagined living, and their duty to the royal Margaret, that Almeric de Courcy rushed into the chamber, and raising in his arms the lovely Mary, left to his brothers in arms the explanation of their arrival.

Ellen, who at the unexpected meeting with her long lost brother, wept tears of unfeigned joy, as he fondly clasped her to his throbbing bosom; while the young cavaliers, following the example of the Earl of Falcon-



bridge, fell at the feet of Margaret, and vowed upon their swords to draw them only in her service; she, with a gracious smile of satisfaction, commanded them to rise, and thanked their zeal, as it well merited, with many a noble commendation. She seemed this night to forget her natural hauteur, and even condescended to grace the table with her royal presence; and giving her hand to the young Earl of Falconbridge, in token of her confidence and friendship, she re-entered, once more, the council-chamber, surrounded by the train of noble cavaliers who shared the enterprize. Almeric de Courcy, blest even beyond his hopes, led Ellen and his lovely Mary; and by the side of the Countess walked fair Adama, with the infant Manfred. A momentary frown darted across the lofty brow of Margaret, as she marked the banner of York, which still hung on high upon the pillar; but the young

Godfrey de Beaclerc observed her rising displeasure, and directed his esquire to bear it thence. Thus peace became restored ; the mantling goblet crowned the social board, and Margaret listened with satisfaction to the recital of events that had thus welcomely restored the friends she needed.

Raymond de Falconbridge, trained from his earliest youth in the firm belief of York's superior claims, had ever dedicated his arm to the support of his cause. His inactivity during the captivity of Mary and the lady Gertrude Mowbray, in the walls of Dunraven castle, had raised some doubts of the sincerity of his attachment, which were confirmed past doubt when Owen Tudor owed his liberty to his favour : far from confuting suspicion, his haughty mind, unconscious of having merited reproach, urged him to turn his arms against the cause he had often bled to support, though not till he had been

despoiled by them, of a very considerable part of his possessions, he had at length been reduced to abandon his castle, which they seized on, and despoiled. Being equally obnoxious to the chiefs of either party, he was compelled to take up his abode in the humble dwelling of Bardolph, the fisherman, whose nephew he past for, at the time he so happily rescued Margaret and the drowning Mary from the foaming waves.

During the days that in his lowly garb he protected Margaret in the towers of Monmouth, his soul became, from conviction, devoted to the cause of Henry, busily revolved the means by which he might restore to the dignity she was estranged from, and oft in his occasional journeys to the neighbouring villages he had remarked some strangers, who, from the secrecy that seemed to envelope their designs, he judged to be followers of the Lancas-

trians. Frequently had he wished to discover to them the situation of the Queen, but knowing well how hateful was the name of Falconbridge to every friend of Henry, he feared to hazard his own safety by discovering his name, neither was he willing to raise hopes of succour in the breast of Margaret, which might prove abortive; no sooner did he find that from the discovery of the young Countess, the Queen and Mary would be enabled to do without his aid, should fortune chance to disappoint his return, than he resolved to hazard every danger, and seek the cavaliers, from whom should they prove enemies, he trusted he might probably effect his own escape without inconvenience to those whom fate seemed to have consigned to his protection.

With the intention of making known his intention, he entered the apartment, but embarrassment obliged him to retire in silence. He read in the eyes of

Mary that she was well acquainted with the possessor of the lost bracelet, and he could not endure the idea of being compelled to resign the loved resemblance of Gertrude Mowbray : in the presence of the Countess too, he felt his secret was not safe ; her eye dwelt with inquiry on his face, for often had she seen him, though in different habit, and he feared lest her tongue should pronounce a name, which it was evident from his great disguise Mary had never suspected him to be possessed of. For how, from Raimond of Falconbridge, from whose impetuous passions both herself and her loved kinswoman had experienced such persecution, could he hope she would place her confidence or expect protection ? He retired hastily, and much perplexed, nor did he re-enter till the moment he was prepared to depart the tower. It was at that moment that he had seized an opportunity to place the jewels that en-

circled the valued portrait, on the window seat, believing no one to be in the chamber ; when, to his utter surprise, he saw Mary take them up ; and lest she should demand the prize which love forbade him to resign, he hurried from the hall. The dagger, which, as it gleamed in his hand, appalled her timid spirit, was one that he had taken that instant from the armoury for his defence in his adventurous expedition. It was that circumstance which made her resolve to keep him ignorant as to what part of the mansion they were retired ; and take so much pains to prevent the Countess or Adama from returning to the hall to inform him. Every moment expecting their approach, he waited till the midnight hour was past, and auguring that they would no more venture to confide in him, resolved not to live one hour suspected, longer than inevitable necessity rendered unavoidable,

but by some action, worthy of himself, retrieve their lost opinions.

That night he left the desolate halls of Monmouth; and sought by morning's dawn the dwelling where he had observed the cavaliers: the colours of the Yorks, which each wore with indignant regret, from the necessity there unfortunately existed that they should veil their real designs, he soon discovered, were, as he had supposed, a disguise, and his reception was most truly flattering, when he at length made known the purpose of his coming.

For many days they had in vain endeavoured to discover the retreat of Margaret, and despairing of accomplishing it, awaited but for the hourly expected arrival of the Earl of Oxford to pursue their route to the west; most readily did they follow the paths marked out by the Lord Falconbridge, who

brought them some few hours after the close of evening to Monmouth; and though ignorant of what part of the tower they now inhabited, despaired not much of being able soon to discover the fair and noble fugitives, whose suspicions, he was well aware, must by that time be wrought from concurring circumstances to the most alarming height.

Amidst the many whose bosoms glowed with real pleasure at this fortunate meeting, fortune decreed that very few should taste it unalloyed; Margaret heard, however, with the most firm reliance, that success would crown the issue of her cause, of the numerous army then assembled near Warwick, and counted every hour to be an age until she set forwards to join them; but her high hopes fell when she found that Henry had been prevailed on to assume the command, and was every day expected to give battle to the well disc



plined troops of the wily Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Raymond of Falconbridge too, was truly happy while he prest to his lips the portrait of Gertrude, and received from Lady Mary permission to wear it as his own ; but short, alas ! was the fond dream of delusive felicity, when the same tongue told him the lovely original was no more, for Mary was still uninformed of the circumstances relating to her fair kinswomen, after her supposed death in the tents of Margaret, and still in common with all who knew and loved the peerless maid, lamented her early destiny.

Tears stole from the eyes of the gallant Falconbridge, and mingled with those of Mary as they walked apart in the hall, and talked of Gertrude, but caution whispered her to conceal the conduct of the Queen on that occasion, for she remembered the impetuous sallies of his soul, during her residence in

Dunraven castle, and trembled lest they should again be awakened.

Alas ! for Ellen, keener far were the arrows that were destined to pierce a heart still bleeding with affliction. Amidst the clouds of care that stole at times painfully visible, over the features of her brother ; and though she strove fondly to dispel them, and Mary's face was decked with smiles, that cleared each anxious doubt that absence frames, still would the pensive sigh obtrude, and still he seemed to struggle with some secret sorrow that preyed upon his quiet. The gentle countess tenderly solicited to be the partaker of his afflictions, while De Courcy, lifting his eyes to the portrait of his father that hung opposite, pressed her hand in his, and rose to leave the chamber, in order to conceal emotions that could not be repressed. Ellen followed him, she seized his hand with solicitude. " Ah ! Almerick," she exclaimed, " in pity

cease to torture me with this suspense. Say why that tear? Why did it start when you contemplated the features of our father."

"Dear Ellen, strive," he cried, as he embraced her with affection, "strive to support with greater fortitude than your brother does, the heavy weight of woe that is assigned you. He is—and yet I cannot tell it you—he is, alas! —" "no more!" cried the weeping Ellen, while her whole frame trembled with agony at the idea, and her wan cheek wore still a paler hue.

"Oh! thou divinest too truly," answered Almerick, "he is indeed no more; yet turn not from me. Here Ellen, in these arms that ever will protect and succour you, repose your griefs, and rest assured that he whom we lament, left not this world unhappy; his calm and gentle spirit, even upon earth, was fitted for the Heaven he enjoys."

Almerick in that hour forgot that

Ellen was not all he wished her. His whole soul was turned to love and pity; and in her converse, whom for two long years his eyes had not beheld, tranquillity once more stole o'er his mind, till Adama appeared with Manfred, and roused the blush of indignant honour on his manly cheek.

Ellen, with anguish marked the change. "Oh! frown not on my boy, my gentle Almerick," she cried, "It is to you alone that he must lift his eyes for pity and protection, for Oh! too sure; his father——"

"Has treated you with scorn, I fear me much," said Almerick, "but Ellen's child——" and he seemed to struggle between affection and a sense of injured honour, as he received him in his arms, "must never want a father while De Courcy lives."

"He is," said Ellen, smiling through

her tears, "unfortunate indeed, but not ignoble, or I had never met the eyes of Almerick."

The ingenuous warmth with which she uttered the sentence, was a conviction to De Courcy. "Of that," said he, as again he embraced her fondly, "we will talk hereafter, Ellen; at present we will seek for Mary, you will go with me, see, the Queen wishes to retire; come."

Never did De Courcy's animated countenance wear a milder grace, than as he slowly re-paced the dusky hall, with Ellen by his side; and the young Manfred in his arms, while his tall plumes floated upon the breeze; and added to the native elegance that marked his graceful form.

The attack made on the castle of Saint Briavals, had terminated after a hard fought contest of some hour's space, in the defeat of the besiegers, who, under covert of the night, effect-

ed their retreat, leaving their dead upon the ensanguined plain, and no inconsiderable number of their hardiest companions prisoners within the Fort, but the absence of the Queen threw a general damp on every prospect. Lord Pembroke received the following day intelligence of a gallant army led by the noble John de Warenne, being on their march to join her standard at Saint Briavals, in order to march to the aid of Henry, then encamped near Warwick: a measure of high importance, but which unfortunately, the ignorance of her place of retreat rendered impracticable. There were many who proposed to follow, and endeavour to prevail on her to return, and of that number was De Courcy, who, as the Lady Mary was one of the attendants of her flight, was doubly interested in it. Jealousy sat confest upon the brow of Pembroke; but love, though its sway was absolute in his soul, expelled

not loyalty ; fully did he feel of how much consequence the measure was to the interest of his royal brother, and nobly resolved not to oppose it. In less than an hour they departed from the castle, and pursuing the route taken by the Queen and her followers, ere many hours were elapsed arrived at the coast, but they were only time enough to catch a distant glimpse of the vessel as it bore her from them. Without delay it was resolved to follow, but ere they could embark the storm arose, nor could the mariners, who partook not of their impatience, be prevailed on to hazard their bark to the mercy of the tempest.

'Twas this delay proved fatal to their purpose, and though they landed the ensuing evening on the coast of Monmouth, they found it impossible to gain the smallest certain intelligence. Lord Pembroke, who from various circumstances had reason to believe that she

was in that neighbourhood, and whose eagerness to promote the cause he fought for, perceived not the difficulties which but too frequently opposed themselves to the undertakings of King Henry's friends; immediately upon the arrival of the Lord de Warenne, prepared to leave Saint Briavals, and follow thither; and by a messenger dispatched for that purpose, the cavaliers had, on the very day that Falconbridge so opportunely conducted them to Margaret, been informed that they might very speedily look for their arrival in that part of the country.

It was the following morning that was destined to present to the eyes of Margaret a sight most truly welcome. High o'er the craggy side of the stupendous mountain, wound in proud array the armies of Pembroke and the Lord de Warenne, the resplendant glories of the rising sun play on their burnished arms, and loud and oft the in-



spiring notes of the shrill clarion came wafted on the passing gale, each youthful warrior called his page to arm him, that he might go forth to welcome them; the impatient Raby aided his gallant friend De Montville to clasp the massy buckler on his arm, and the young, gay De Spencer girt on the thigh of his brave brother, the noble-minded Hugh, his oft-tried Cortleaxe, while Douglas with indignation hurled down the banner of the white rose, and from the battlements of the watch tower proudly displayed the badge of the Lancastrians; nay even Margaret herself disdained not to assist in accoutreing her gallant knights; and with an exulting heart beheld them sally from the rattling drawbridge, to meet, and to conduct her friends towards the towers of Monmouth.

On a sudden, the vanguard of the cavalcade halted in the valley, they observed the signals from the tower,

and dispatched a small number of the chiefs to bear their duties to their sovereign, while the main body remained to pitch their tents on the refreshing banks of the Severn's winding stream. "Who is he?" asked Mary, as she leaned upon the battlements, "Who is he that hither bends his way?" "Ha! by my soul," exclaimed De Courcy, "it is the noble Nevil. Edward was ever foremost in our sovereign's service." The Countess left the scarf half untied, which she was placing over her brother's shoulder, and was retiring in some confusion.

"You are not leaving us, Ellen," said he. "I would avoid your friend," she answered with diffidence, "the many marks of his regard shewn to our family do but serve to tell me I was ungrateful."

"Nevil," he replied, "can never blame her, in whom he ever saw perfections only. Fly him not; nay, Ellen,

you need not blush, he comes but as your friend. Some months have passed since he became the enviable lord of the fair Anne Montalto, whose beauty, sure, may well secure his faith."

"If merit can insure felicity," said Ellen, "Sir Edward Nevil cannot miss of it, and yet, at present I would not wish to meet him."

De Courcy felt full well that the cause originated in her change of circumstances since she had quitted Stratford with Count John, and secretly vowed to teach him yet to repent the slights he shewed their house.

"I will descend and meet him, then," said he, "farewell, commend me to the Queen, and say that I return to attend her speedily, at present I'll to the Lord Pembroke, and bid him welcome."

"Ah! wherefore," exclaimed Mary, as she watched his departure, "has heaven decreed that two such gallant spi-

rits should be enemies. Would but the noble Pembroke learn like Nevil, to slight a heart that meets not his with the regard it merits, all might be happy yet."

High beat the heart of Margaret with expectation, and ardent were her wishes for the dawn, when at the head of her brave followers she should march forward to her royal lord. Her entrance into the camp of the Lord de Warenne was welcomed by the loud and repeated shouts of the soldiery, who dedicated that night to pleasure and repose, while their Queen passed it in council with the assembled chiefs, and early as the dawn, came forth, surrounded by her nobles, and mounting on her richly caparisoned steed, rode forwards at the head of her united bands.

With toil unceasing they pursued their way, and happily reached the royal camp, where they received most

honourable welcome, in time to leud their aid in that day's battle. Alas ! how little did even that aid avail, while the ill-diciplined vassals of Henry appeared to tremble even at the name of York, and to vie only with each other who should be the first to join the standards of the enemy. The Earl of March, who feared the intrepid spirit of Margaret even more than all her host, had in secret given command to seize her person, believing that that would throw an utter damp on the ardour of her followers ; the prince, too, whom he knew the people idolized, he spared no means untried to get within the limits of his power. Fortunately for herself, whose too rigid treatment of the adherents of York had certainly been sufficient to make her tremble at the idea of Edward's vengeance, the wretches whom he had selected found her not so ill attended as to become the easy prey they had hoped, for with her

own hand she bravely defended herself, till Pembroke hastening to her aid, encountered hand to hand the Earl of Devonshire. Sir Hugh Montgomery next engaged his sword, and the noble Jasper had fallen beneath his arm, had not De Courcy, through opposing spears, forced his way to the spot, where gallantly contending with an ignoble enemy, who meanly took odds to combat mortal man, he found him sinking beneath repeated wounds. The sword of De Courcy pierced the bosom of the treacherous knight, and kept at distance those who still essayed to prevent the Lord Pembroke from escaping their dark revenge; who faint with loss of blood, and leaning on his lance, slowly retreated from the fatal field, and by his absence relieved his enemies from more than half the terrors of the fight. In that day's battle, too, died the base Lord Huntingdon; he followed the banners of the Earl of Devon-

shire, and encountered the arm of Raymond of Falconbridge, whose ponderous battle-axe clove his mighty helmet, and revenged at once the injuries of the Lady Gertrude Mowbray and himself. But the gallantry of the noble followers of Lancaster was doomed to bend to that of York, and Edward of March with royal honours conducted the meek-minded Henry to the metropolis, where, not daring to assume the crown his ambition panted for, he left to him the title of sovereign, while to himself he reserved the power. The armies were in consequence of these arrangements disbanded in a short time after, and Henry and Margaret once more resumed the regal seat; but distrust and hate sunk deep within her soul, yet did she wear, like York, the pliant mask of affected sincerity, and lived alike deceiving and deceived.

By the death of the lord Huntingdon the Lord of Falconbridge was again

restored to his native seats. After he was constrained to fly his castle, Lord Huntingdon had received from Edward of York the grant of all his lands which they had seized on; but the vassals, who loved their lord, took arms against him, and under the command of the Countess Alice, defended the castle of Dunraven against the spoiler, but by a failure in some of their operations, it had after a fortnight's siege fallen into the hands of Lord Huntingdon; and the countess, who could not without the most mortifying reflections behold the ancient possessions of her husband's house transferred to the hands of strangers, even by the party they had for years supported, pined in secret, and expired in captivity, for this cause did Raimond's sword seek the Lord Huntingdon in the fields of war; and proudly did he bear his banners to his native halls.

Mary, whose services were now not so important to her royal mistress, glad



ly retired from a court, that ever had for her but little charms, to seek for happiness beneath the roofs of her noble uncle of Norfolk; the welcome news of Getrude's fortunate escape from the vindictive Margaret, doubled her impatience to visit the halls of Framlingham: with her, too, went fair Ellen; and Almerick gladly availed himself of the privilege of kindred to become their escort. Falconbridge witnessed the departure of the happy groupe with real regret, and sighed as he bade them adieu, he was about to say, "commend me to the noble Gertrude," but he remembered the graceful Owen, and pride withheld his speech; alas! he knew not that the gentle Knight lay a pale corpse upon the ensanguined plains of Northampton; where he fell, bravely fighting in a cause which even heaven itself seemed to have forsaken.

The day that witnessed their wel-

come entrance at the gates of Framlingham Castle, was marked with more than usual happiness; again the beautiful daughter of Norfolk, as she sat between her long-lost loved companions, Ellen and Mary, once more enjoyed the felicity that even in their infant years had united these amiable hearts in bonds of love, that even time and absence had not weakened: the Duke, too, who, since fate had robbed him of his gentle consort had almost forgot to smile, contemplated with delight the much loved party, that surrounded him, yet when he looked on Ellen the pitying sigh would burst unbidden from his heart; once she observed him, as his eyes were fixed with evident concern, and something like suspicion, on her face, while she was fondly contemplating the loved resemblance of the Count John, in the features of the infant Manfred, a blush of momentary anger darted

over her fair wan cheek, while, wrapping her veil around him, she arose, and, with a tear, retired from the apartment; this circumstance did not pass unobserved by De Courcy, upon whose brow were the traces of mingled pity for her sorrows, and resentment for the author of them. “ Ellen must live no longer an object of suspicion,” said the Duke, rising with emotion, as she left the room, “ either she must be the acknowledged wife of the Count of Luxembourg, or his sword must answer the dishonor brought by his means upon the once fair fame of the De Courcys.”

Her ear, as she was slowly pacing the adjoining gallery, caught the too well remembered name of Luxembourg; she turned involuntarily, and beheld the hand of Almerick resting on the sword, that, half unsheathed, gleamed in the setting beam. “ Ellen,” said he, “ shall not be tamely wronged,

nor shall your grace again have reason to reproach my tardiness ; this arm, no longer called on to defend its sovereign, shall seek a brave revenge ; too long, withheld by love's soft influence, have I, perhaps, delayed to seek the Count of Luxembourg, yet will I not presume to use the fascinating plea that lulled my soul into forgetfulness ; to-morrow's sun sets not before I bid adieu to Framlingham, for Ellen's injuries demand a noble reparation."

"Ha ! recall that vow, my angry brother," she exclaimed, entering with frantic steps, "listen, oh ! if you ever felt the influence of pity ; listen to the earnest prayer of the ill-fated Ellen ; tempt not the vengeance of the Gods ; nor dare to draw that sword in private quarrel, which should defend your native country ; for me, heed me no more, my fate is fixed irrevocably, Long has my wearied soul sought refuge from affliction ; long sighed to quit

a world, hated since John of Luxembourg is lost; oh! suffer me to seek the peace I sigh for, within the holy House of Walsingham, and end my days unconscious of having drawn destruction on the last noble heir of all our house."

Overcome with grief she ceased, and sunk into the arms of Almerick, which as he raised from the earth, enclosed her with affection, as she wept upon his bosom. With calmest kindest reasoning did he strive to soothe her anguish, and to preserve the stern decrees of honor unfringed, consigned her to the gentle cares of Mary, and the Lady Gertrude, while the Duke forced him from a scene, which, much he feared, would mar his just resolves.

Many were the pangs it cost De Courcy's heart, to resist the pathetic pleadings of his gentle sister, but, honour's voice could not be disobeyed,

and the Duke, strongly urged him to depart. Already did his followers wait his coming forth : already had he bade, with lingering regret, adieu to Mary, when the shrill horn sounded below the castle walls, and, on the bridge, appeared the unexpected Raimond of Falcolnbridge, and, at his side, with courtly grace, rode a young Knight of martial mien, whose eyes, with earnest impatience, were raised towards the richly gilded lattice, behind which, stood the lovely mistress of the castle, and her fair kinswoman, to observe the regretted departure of De Courcy, then on the point of bidding a last farewell to the sorrowing Ellen, who, on the steps of the castle, was reluctantly preparing to follow the good Duke into the hall, the eyes of the stranger, rested, with extatic pleasure, on her enchanting form, while, leaping from his free and fiery steed, he gave the reins to his squire, and, darting up the steps

clasped her with rapture, to his panting heart. De Courcy, for a moment, gazed with wonder, "what uncourteous stranger dares thus presume," he cried, "to intrude his un-wished for presence on the Countess of Luxembourg?"

"It is surely," replied the Duke of Norfolk, "the Count John."

"Your graces recollection honors me," he answered, "your hand, De Courcy, for I must hope, we meet on terms of friendship, and that I used, perchance, somewhat too little ceremony; your long lost beauteous sister, must be my excuse."

"For that you have my pardon; good my Lord, but, there are other subjects for discussion, such as concern the honor of our House, and claim an explanation."

"It is at your service, Sir," replied the Count; Lord Falcolnbridge, "oblige me by leading in the Countess."

"This way then," answered Almerick, "your Grace will honor us with your attention."

The Duke bowed his assent, and, commending the young Earl to the care of his beauteous daughter, retired with his guests to the library, while Mary, with attentive tenderness, led the half-expiring Ellen to her chamber, with many an anxious wish, lest the result of Almerick's conference with the Count of Luxembourg, should not terminate propitious to their general happiness.

The Count, rising at length, superior to the powers of the usurping Conrad, and his numerous allies, ascended, in security and honor to the regal seat of his father", and turned his every thought to the recovery of his regretted Countess. From Ulrick of Lichtenstein he learned the treachery that had deprived him of his soul's best treasure. The Baron fell an early victim to private quarrel, and, in the awful hour of approaching



death, entreated, and received the pardon of his friend. The Count lost not an hour before he quitted Luxembourg, and in the Court of England, sought, in vain, to find his beauteous Ellen; it was there, that, Raimond of Falcolnbridge had met, once more, the friend he ever held the nearest to his heart; and, rejoiced to find that the same means that would restore the Count to happiness, would, also, render him a welcome guest in the mansion of the Duke of Norfolk. He conducted the Count of Luxembourg, to Framlingham, where, his presence, by restoring felicity to the breast of Ellen, had, also, diffused it throughout the circle of her gentle kindred; but, what was more, to Falcolnbridge, the lovely Gertrude payed him with a smile.

Three months did they pass within the walls of Framlingham, in peace and joy, nor did the hours pass with lingering pace, even the Count, though

he longed, with impatience, to introduce his lovely Countess to his subjects eyes, thought, with regret on the approaching day, that was to separate him from friends, he loved, with most unfeigned regard, and earnestly did he entreat the noble Norfolk, to quit his native seats, and, with the presence of himself and the fair Gertrude, grace the *entré* of Ellen into the gate of Luxembourg, nor did the Duke long hesitate to accord with the united wishes of his much esteemed guests. Almerick and Mary, whom he regarded as the children of his adoption, of course went with the Duke, and Falcolnbridge, did not hear, with regret, the wishes of Count John, that the companion of his youthful hours should be the witness of his new born felicity.

The splendor and magnificence of their train, were suitable, in every respect, to their illustrious rank, and their reception, marked with every honor,

while mirth and revelry alone employed the gaily circling hours. And yet their happiness was not complete. The noble Norfolk marked with solicitude the clouds of care that did but too frequently intrude over the animated features of his much loved daughter; in vain he strove to divine the cause; he remembered the death of the graceful Owen, but he suspected not that he had ever inspired a sentiment warmer than esteem in the breast of her he idolized. He spoke of it to the countess, "and is your grace," said she with a playful smile, "unable to discover, that my fair cousin is not insensible to the numerous merits of the amiable Falconbridge."

"Trust me, Ellen," answered the Duke, "I suspected it not. But say, for you, it seems, are well instructed, if the young, gallant Raymond loves your kinswoman, why are his wishes unacknowledged."

“They are not so, my Lord, the Count John and myself (but first you must assure me of forgiveness) have presumed to offer our assistance to his suit, but with a nobleness all his own, he insisted on our silence. His heart has long been Gertrude’s willing captive, but the disparity of his fortune, compels him to admire at hopeless distance the heiress of your grace’s noble house.”

“That circumstance, when balanced with his virtues,” said the Duke, “is but a light objection, Ellen, and you may tell him, that from me at least he needs not fear denial, but that decision rests alone with Gertrude.”

With an exulting heart the happy Countess sought her lord, and Falconbridge, to tell the fortunate event, and now, my lord, what farther services may you have for me. Here in the

palace garden walks my cousin, would you that I should go and plead your cause, while you amuse my lord."

"Nay, Ellen, let him go ;" exclaimed the Count, his company may happily prove to Gertrude something more amusing than it has been to me. Yonder goes Almerick, we will follow him, though truth we may not chance to gain by that."

Falconbridge read not in the eyes of Gertrude an ungentle doom, and on the day that Mary gave her hand to the amiable De Courcy, she yielded hers to him who alone was worthy of her love. The noble Pembroke, in whose bosom the warmth of gratitude glowed with an ardour equal to his other eminent merits, endeavoured to reflect on Almerick's happiness without regret, and to subdue a passion which hope itself could now no longer flatter ; but unable to trust his resolution in the too fascinating society of the Countess

of Monmouth, he retired into Wales and assisted his sister in law, the widow of Richmond, in training to future glory the rising hope of the Lancastrian line, the young Lord Henry, till the cause of his royal brother too soon again recalled him to the tented field, where each revolving year added fresh laurels, to the glorious wreathes that early adorned the brows of him, who of all the nobles of the realm deserved the most to wear them.

Splendid, on her return to the court of England, were the banquets given by Margaret in honour of the marriage of the daughter of Suffolk, for Almerick felt that the honour of a soldier would be questioned who left his native land while danger menaced it. Soon after heaven had blessed him with her hand, he conducted her to England. Ellen and the Count regretted the departure of their friends from Luxembourg; and in their court, when the

ill-fated line of Lancaster lost its ascendancy, did Almerick and Falconbridge find a hospitable home. One only daughter (the accomplished Constance) did heaven bestow on Mary and De Courcy, who wedded with the brave and gallant Manfred, the heir of Ellen and the Earl St. Paul. The lady Gertrude and her lord, whose youthful sallies of impetuous passions, were by her virtues vanquished, returned in the succeeding reign to England, where under the fourth Edward, the illustrious honors of the house of Norfolk flourished with added graces in their noble offspring.

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